

"BOYS ON THE SIDE"

an original screenplay

by

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FIRST DRAFT
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"BOYS ON THE SIDE"

FADE IN:

INT. DANCING SCHOOL "BALLROOM" - DAY (1969)

Here's what we SEE: A pre-teen ballroom dancing class. Girls in party dresses dance with girls, giggling; the boys are on the side against the wall, resisting the entreaties of the matronly instructor...

Here's what we HEAR: a PIANO, a SPATTERING OF APPLAUSE, a woman's low, rough voice, and the LOUD CHATTER of a Melrose coffee house. The voice belongs to JANE DELUCA.

JANE (V.O.)

Thank you. Johnny, you take a bow -- Johnny Figgis on saxophone... Isn't he fine? Okay, guys, this is the one for the road... This is one by the great Dinah Washington, so listen up.

On the piano she begins the Richard Whiting ballad, "My Ideal," at times losing the fight to be heard above the patrons.

JANE (V.O.)

(calling to a waiter)

Cappucino down here, Jimmy.

(singing)

"Will I ever find/ The boy in my mind/ The one who is my ideal..."

And now, still hearing Jane and her inattentive audience, we see:

MONTAGE: SCRATCHY SUPER-8 HOME MOVIE FOOTAGE

(1) 1968. We see two kids, a ten-year-old ROBIN NICKERSON, blonde and skinny, and her two-years-older brother TOMMY, and their mother ELAINE, a blonde woman in her thirties, standing in front of a station wagon, its luggage rack loaded and tarped. They're holding a sign decorated with a U.S. flag and a painting of a soldier reading, "WELCOME HOME, DADDY! OUR HERO!" Robin has a sign around her neck: "SAN DIEGO OR BUST."

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JANE (V.O.)

(singing)

"Maybe he's a dream/ And yet he
might be/ Just around the
corner/ Waiting for me..."

(2) 1968. Elaine and the two children at Grand Canyon.
The young Robin comes up to the camera and says (MOS),
"I love you, Daddy."

JANE (V.O.)

(singing)

"Will I recognize/ A light in
his eyes/ That no other eyes
reveal..."

(3) 1978. Super-8 footage of Robin, now twenty,
walking down the runway in a beauty pageant wearing a
banner, "Miss Stamford". She looks like a young Grace
Kelly, shagged.

JANE (V.O.)

(singing)

"Or will I pass him by/ And
never even know that/ He is my
ideal..."

CUSTOMER (V.O.)

Get me a water while you're up!

The singing and the noise -- particularly one LOUD
female laughter -- continue over the following scenes:

INT. EDELMAN HEALTH CENTER - HOLLYWOOD - DAY (MOS)

ROBIN NICKERSON, now in her early thirties, comes out of
an interview room in the waiting area. There are four
others there, all men, from twenty to fifty years old.
A calendar on the wall gives the year as 1991. Someone
has decorated the place for Christmas and Hannukah.
There are safe sex and Keith Haring posters on the
walls, the customary philodendrons, and a TV screen
playing a medical video to a watching client.

Robin's life is lived in the interior, though the
accessories of a life in the world -- a packed Filofax,
a portable phone, a briefcase, and the MLS book of Los
Angeles real estate listings -- fill the chair beside
her. Past the good clothes, the perfect skin, the
careful makeup, is someone wanting to run, wanting to
know where to run: she has gotten bad news, maybe the
worst news we can get right now.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

She sits down, takes deliberate breaths. A paper cup of water is handed to her by a young, thin man in his early twenties. Robin looks up, takes it politely, smiles. She drinks a little. The young man returns to his chair and his magazine, and Robin, sitting beneath an AIDS awareness poster of Magic Johnson, holds her paper cup.

JANE (V.O.)

"Maybe he's a dream/ And yet he
might be/ Just around the
corner/ Waiting for me..."

INT. LA BREA COFFEE HOUSE - NIGHT (PRESENT TIME)

Here's where Jane is singing. We see now what she's been fighting: an early, inattentive crowd. Only a few listen to Jane, who sits at the piano, singing, with JOHNNY behind her on sax. Johnny's white, mild, thirty-five. It's hard to tell, but JANE DELUCA might be forty. She's black, strong, and the song she sings is at odds with her appearance and her own ideas of herself. Sentimental, worshipful, innocent -- these aren't words Jane would apply to herself, but she sings the song sincerely. No one Jane has ever been with has called her beautiful, but there is real pleasure to be had in watching her -- a pleasure only a few in this room, in all the rooms, are capable of feeling.

JANE

(singing)

"Will I recognize/ The light in
his eyes/ That no other eyes
reveal..."

She catches sight of a female customer, the source of the persistent LAUGHING: a GIRL WITH ATTITUDE in her twenties at a table near the front, in flirtatious conversation with her date.

INT. JON DOUGLAS REALTY OFFICE - NIGHT (PRESENT TIME) (MOS)

Robin's farewell office party. A computer-printed banner is strung across the room saying, "WE'LL MISS YOU, ROBIN. COME BACK SOON." Her desk -- one of the nicer ones, befitting her status as a steady earner -- is swamped with flowers, presents, cards. Robin, at the center of a huge group, makes a short speech.

JANE (V.O.)

(singing)

"Although he may be late/ I
trust in fate..."

INT. LA BREA COFFEE HOUSE - NIGHT

It's 9:00 p.m., a Monday night in May. The coffee house is filling up, but no one seems to be paying attention to Jane. We see the OWNER of the nightclub against the wall watching Jane, then noting the lackluster response of his customers.

JANE

(singing)

"And so I wait/ For my ideal/ I
wait for my ideal."

The song ends. Slight, very slight APPLAUSE.

JANE

Thank you. We're here Mondays
and Wednesdays, from seven to
nine. I'm Jane DeLuca, this is
Johnny Figgis, and we thank
you. In about fifteen minutes,
Brasilia will be here --

There's some APPLAUSE at this. Jane smiles grudgingly.

JANE

-- so enjoy yourselves and
thank you...

Desultory applause. Jane turns to Johnny, who's putting
his instrument in its case.

JOHNNY

Good show.

JANE

What am I, invisible? No one
even looked at me.

JOHNNY

It happens.

JANE

I haven't had an audience like
this since the last one. Did
you get a load of that white
chick?

JOHNNY

Ah, they're assholes, what do
you expect? Jane!

But Jane is already making her way to the table where
the GIRL customer WITH ATTITUDE is smugly watching her
DATE make his way to the bathroom.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

She turns back to see Jane, who's smiling warmly down at her. On the table are the remains of a quiche and two coffees.

JANE

Oooh, he is something.

GIRL WITH ATTITUDE

(puzzled at being
addressed by Jane)

Yes, he is, actually.

JANE

First date?

GIRL WITH ATTITUDE

Yes. Uh, do you want to clear
or something? You can take
those, but leave the cups.

JANE

(still smiling)

I just sing here, remember? I
watched you all through the
last set. I know what that
first date's like. I'm glad I
could help.

GIRL WITH ATTITUDE

Help? What do you mean, help?

JANE

The thing here.

(she touches her nose)

You had a little dirty nose
thing happening. It was a real
dangler. I mean, whoa!

We can see the panic in the Girl With Attitude's face.
Her hand flies to her face.

JANE

I could see it from over there,
so I kept touching my nose like
this to warn you, and it
worked. We gals gotta stick
together.

Glancing back, Jane sees Johnny talking to the Owner.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GIRL WITH ATTITUDE

(squinting into the
bowl of a teaspoon)

Oh my God. Oh my God.

JANE

No, you got it, you got it --
finally. It couldn't've been
more than half an hour.

(off her reaction)

Relax, he probably didn't even
notice.

GIRL WITH ATTITUDE

You could see it from over
there!

JANE

It was just the way the light
hit it.

(she looks behind her)

Ooops, here he comes. Well,
good luck. Forget about it.

She leaves the stricken Girl With Attitude behind her
and smiles her way to the stage, joining Johnny. The
Owner has just left.

JOHNNY

Not the booger thing again.

JANE

Fuck with me, don't fuck with
Dinah. What'd he want?

She sees the Girl With Attitude trying to be casual, but
her confidence is long gone. Jane waves to her from the
stage, then runs her fingernail between her front teeth,
as if trying to communicate, "Spinach, honey."

JOHNNY

Nothing. You can't take this
so personally, Jane.

JANE

What, her? She's L.A. It'll
be different in New York.

JOHNNY

Not just her. Everything.
Ups, downs, you know.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Jane sees something in his face, realizes he's holding out on her. She fires a quick glance at the Owner across the room, who shrugs apologetically. Jane grimly gives him the finger.

EXT. LA BREA AVENUE - NIGHT

Jane, carrying her sign, her posters, her music, strides to her car. Johnny, carrying his music and sax, follows.

JANE

It's a blessing in disguise.
We're going to New York anyway,
we'll go quicker. I'll see if
we can move up that booking in
the Village, and the demo tape
is great, the mix'll be
finished tonight --

JOHNNY

Maybe this is telling us
something.

JANE

We're fired, it's telling us
we're fucking fired.

JOHNNY

Not just this. I mean, the
bookings have been lousy, and
our material, come on...

(beat)

Maybe New York's not the answer
to our problems. Maybe there's
no answer.

JANE

What's that supposed to mean?

JOHNNY

I've had an offer. Tom got me
some studio work. It's in
town, it's good money. And I
gotta think of Debbie.

JANE

Debbie? The little girl who
sets her hair, she's a factor?

They reach Johnny's car. He's putting his things in the trunk.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JOHNNY

Like, she's my wife. She wants a house, kids. She likes it here.

JANE

She can be pro-life in New York. I knew marrying her would screw things up.

JOHNNY

I gotta be realistic, I gotta look ahead. You've been doing this for seventeen years, and look... I don't want that to happen to me.

JANE

She's holding you back, everyone says it. She's Yoko with bangs.

JOHNNY

They don't say she's holding me back.

Jane, stung, is silent.

JOHNNY

Listen, don't go to New York. If it's not happening here, at least you got the voice-over stuff happening.

JANE

You know what? Play daddy with the wife, okay?

JOHNNY

Aw, Jane...

But she's already walking away with her stuff...

EXT. BEVERLY BLVD. RECORDING STUDIOS - NIGHT

LOUD MUSIC.

INT. BEVERLY RECORDING STUDIOS - NIGHT

Jane enters a sound room. A long-haired smoker, STEVE, is at the mixing board. He's mixing some loud ROCK MUSIC.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Jane throws her bag down, takes out some reel-to-reel tape, taps him on the shoulder. He nods, continues his work a moment, then turns down the volume. A clock on the wall reads 10 p.m. Behind a glass window on one side is a little room with a mike on a stand.

STEVE

I'm putting you on the Pillow
Talk account again.

JANE

I got two hours coming, don't
I? For the stuff last week.

STEVE

They want a make-good on the
last one. Some technical shit.
My fault. And they re-wrote
it.

JANE

You wouldn't be trying to screw
a freebie out of me, would you?

STEVE

Please. This is a class act.

LATER

Jane's in the booth, headphones on, reading a script.

JANE

(reading in a flat
voice)

She says "love tool" twice.
What do you think, "love rod"
or -- how about "dick"? I'll
change them all, "dick, dick,
throbbing dick, dick." Simple,
direct --

(she looks up;
suspiciously)

Hey. Lemme see your hands.

STEVE

(smiling, tapping his
headphones)

I'm gonna send you something to
put you in the mood.

JANE

Good luck. Okay. Go.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JANE (CONT'D)
(she listens to her
earphones, then begins
reading)

"Pillow Talk Productions
presents a very sensual romance
fantasy for only two dollars
for the entire call. If you
hang up before the tone, you
will not be charged for this
call. Minors should be aware
that the cost of this call will
appear on their parents' bill,
so please ask your parents'
permission. Now sit back and
enjoy, because it's Twins
Night..."

(looks up, in her own
voice:)

I gotta do two voices?

EXT. SILVER LAKE - NIGHT (MIDNIGHT)

Jane's late-seventies Toyota, covered with "FOR SALE" signs, pulls into a parking space on the street. Jane gets out, trudges up to an apartment building. Two women are coming out of her building, loaded down with boxes and two framed pictures.

JANE
Grace?

GRACE
There you are. This is
Carolyn.

CAROLYN
Hi.

GRACE
I came for the rest of my
stuff. I got your message.

JANE
The part that said call first?
I want the keys.

Untroubled, Grace hands her the keys.

GRACE
Let me know your address in New
York.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Jane says nothing. Grace and Carolyn exchange a private look, then go.

JANE
And give your friends your new
number, it's been a month!

She stares after them, unhappy with her parting shot...

INT. JANE'S APARTMENT - DAY

Jane is packing boxes. She is wadding up newspaper but stops: something in this L.A. Weekly has caught her eye.

L.A. WEEKLY CLASSIFIEDS

Under the heading "RIDES": "WILL PAY FOR DRIVER TO EAST COAST."

BACK TO JANE

A moment; a shrug; she reaches for the phone.

INT. ROBIN'S SANTA MONICA CONDOMINIUM - DAY

Robin's asleep. The VCR, hooked up to Robin's 8mm video camera, is playing some of the home movie tapes. The daylight streams in. She looks beautiful and untroubled. The phone RINGS, then RINGS AGAIN. Robin wakes up, fumbles for it, lifts the receiver to her ear.

ROBIN
Hello?

EXT. MOUSTACHE CAFE, MELROSE AVENUE - DAY

INT. MOUSTACHE CAFE - TABLE - DAY

Robin and Jane, in mid-stream. Jane has the clipped ad on the table; Robin has a map.

JANE
... That was back in seventy-eight. I was going to be the new Aretha. But the old Aretha's the new Aretha. Anyway, in this town there's only room for one black girl at a time.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ROBIN
(seeing through this)
Sure.

JANE
So I'm getting the fuck out.

We notice Robin reacting ever so slightly to the word
"fuck", but she covers well. It goes right past Jane.

JANE
I'll do the New York club
scene, get some heat working --

ROBIN
That's fine, I'll drop you
there and drive up to
Connecticut on my own. You
know, I used to sing, too.

JANE
Really.

ROBIN
Nothing professional. In the
pageants.

JANE
Beauty pageants?

ROBIN
As part of the talent
competition. I played the
piano and sang.

JANE
Like what?

ROBIN
"Way Over Yonder". Carole
King. And "Close to You." The
Carpenters. It was the
seventies.

JANE
"Close to You"?

ROBIN
(speaking the lyrics)
You know, why do birds suddenly
appear, just because you are
near? Just like me, they long
to be --

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JANE

(to cut this short)

Yeah, I remember that. So, chronic fatigue syndrome. Why do you want to drive with that?

ROBIN

Sentimental journey. You know that song?

(Jane nods)

In sixty-eight my Mom and my brother and I drove across country to meet my Dad in San Diego. So I want to re-trace it.

JANE

Why?

ROBIN

Why not? No special reason.

JANE

(unsatisfied)

Uh-huh.

Robin reaches into her bag, takes out an old map.

ROBIN

I figure ten days. That okay with you? I pay for all meals, a separate motel room for you, and a check for five hundred. Do you have much luggage?

JANE

(as she lights up)

I'm selling everything.

ROBIN

I hope you don't mind my mentioning this.

(beat)

No smoking in the car?

EXT. MOUSTACHE CAFE - DAY

They are waiting outside. The valet has already brought Robin her car, a large, four-door Mercedes. She is showing Jane the trunk; it's clear Jane just wants to get out of here. In the b.g., far down the street, we see Jane's car. It's smoking. Two valets are running to it. Robin and Jane don't notice.

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CONTINUED:

ROBIN
I'll leave you half, okay?

JANE
Yeah, look...
(to the valet)
Excuse me --

ROBIN
So what do you think? I think
it could work.

JANE
I'll let you know in a day or
two, okay?
(to the Valet)
Where's my car, man? I've been
waiting longer than that guy.

ROBIN
Because I think you'd be fine.
I mean, I think our
personalities would mesh okay.

JANE
Really? Well -- ah, fuck it.
Look, Robin... I think you're a
nice person, a lot of the stuff
you can't help, and I'm sorry
you're sick. But uh, I don't
think we mesh at all, you know?
I'm sure you'll find someone
who thinks driving across
country with the whitest woman
on earth as she retraces family
footsteps and sings selections
from the Carpenters is a treat,
but it ain't me, Miss Daisy, it
ain't me. I'll drive myself.
Maybe I'll see you at a Ho-
Jo's.

(yelling at the Valet)
Where's my fucking car!

ATTENDANT
(pointing down the
street)
It's on fire. He turned it on,
it went on fire.

Jane and Robin both turn to look.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Jane says nothing; she's busy checking her tapes. Robin watches her; must be nice to care about something so much. Behind them, one of the windows in the car explodes. They both look at it.

ROBIN
That's gonna bring down your price.

Jane looks at her. THE SOUND OF PIANO MUSIC...

EXT. SILVER LAKE - JANE'S APARTMENT - DAY

In a room stripped of furniture, Jane is toying with the keys of her piano when the door opens and two guys, one of them Steve, the sound mixer, come in. Quickly she pulls her fingers from the keyboard. Brightly:

JANE
Okay!

INT. ROBIN'S CONDOMINIUM - DAY

Robin has a typewriter, is typing up instructions on little sheets of paper.

EXT. SILVER LAKE - JANE'S GARAGE SALE - DAY

The furniture we saw a few nights ago in Jane's apartment now decorates the sidewalk and parkway of her apartment building. The piano is being loaded onto a truck by Steve and his friend. Jane is dickering with an OLD WOMAN over the price of a standing lamp, but her eyes are on the piano.

INT. ROBIN'S CONDOMINIUM - DAY

Robin tapes little notes to thermostats, light switches, cupboard doors. The owner's manual to each appliance is placed on it.

EXT. SILVER LAKE - JANE'S GARAGE SALE - SUNSET

Not much has sold. Jane gets out of her chair, begins lugging things to the curb.

INT. SILVER LAKE - JANE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

The lights are out. Jane sits in the window, looking down at her things by the curb. Some MUSIC is playing on her ghetto-blaster. She's drinking wine from a styrofoam cup as she smokes and watches.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

She SEES people walking by stop, look around to see if they're being watched, then take things. A bookcase, a chair. The Old Woman who dickered for the lamp comes by, sees the lamp. Passes by, then returns, takes it.

JANE watches it all go. Raises her glass.

INT. ROBIN'S CONDOMINIUM - DAY

Early morning. Robin's lying carefully in bed, awake, showered and fully dressed. Her ALARM goes off.

EXT. SILVER LAKE - JANE'S APARTMENT BLDG. - DAY

Jane lugs her suitcases out of the door. She's got a Walkman hooked to her belt, its headphones circling her neck, the shoebox of tapes clutched under her arm. She HEARS A CAR HORN. She turns, sees Robin's Mercedes at the curb. Robin gets out, waves, smiles.

ROBIN

Good morning!

INT. ROBIN'S CAR - (STATIONARY) - DAY

Jane closes the trunk, gets in. Robin's already there, smiling. She starts the car, pulls into traffic.

ROBIN

I'll get us out of the city, if that's all right. Then you can drive.

JANE

Sure, whatever.

ROBIN

(noticing she's upset)
Looked like a nice neighborhood.

JANE

Assholes, basically.

ROBIN

(smiling)
Oh, you don't mean that.

Jane picks up the map.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JANE

I've got a friend in
Albuquerque. All right if we
stop there for lunch when we
get there?

ROBIN

Sure, no problem. You know, I
really think this area's due
for a turnaround. It's
freeway-friendly, fifteen
minutes to downtown --

Jane puts on her headphones. Robin, rebuffed, tries not
to notice...

EXT. L.A. FREEWAYS - DAY

The Mercedes threads its way through the morning
traffic...

INT. MERCEDES - (MOVING) - DAY

The Mercedes has a sunroof. As Robin drives, she
spreads sunscreen all over her face and arms. Jane
watches, then slaps another cassette tape into her
Walkman.

INT. MERCEDES - (MOVING) - DAY

Later. Now Jane's driving.

ROBIN

And you know how it goes.
Every pageant you win, you
think it's a sign, you're gonna
be a star.

JANE

Yeah, I used to hate that.

ROBIN

So I came to Hollywood and gave
it a try. But I didn't have
what it took. I mean, talent
will out, that's one thing I
learned.

JANE

There's such a thing as bad
luck.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ROBIN

No, I was good, I just wasn't good enough. So I looked around and got into real estate. That's where the pageants paid off. Sizing up situations, handling people, getting what you want from them without them knowing. You know, control.

JANE

You're a spooky little thing, aren't you? I'm about to spin out in terror.

ROBIN

And the personalities and the deals -- the glamor. It's like show business for people without talent.

JANE

Then what's show business?

ROBIN

What do you mean?

JANE

You think everyone who makes it is talented? You, you're good, you're in? You, you're mediocre, you're out? Because a lot of times it works the other way around.

ROBIN

I wasn't saying you weren't good.

JANE

Fuck it, who am I kidding? You're right. I'm good, too. Just not good enough. We're twins.

ROBIN

You don't mean that.

JANE

Yeah, well, you wouldn't understand. The world works for you. Hooray.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Robin decides not to answer. She looks out the window, sees a sign, looks down at her map.

ROBIN

My brother threw up in Baker.
I remember, we pulled over.

JANE

You want to stop and take a
picture?

Robin gives her a tight "very funny" smile.

JANE

Why isn't he taking this trip
down memory lane with you? Or
does he have a life?

ROBIN

He doesn't, as a matter of
fact. Tommy died at eighteen.
Lung cancer. Never smoked.

JANE

Oh, I'm sorry.

ROBIN

(re the Walkman)

Can I use this?

JANE

Sure. Go ahead.

And Robin carefully wipes the earpieces with a little
spray bottle of alcohol, then with Kleenex. As Jane
watches this, her sympathy turns to irritation...

EXT. HIGHWAY 15 - DAY

The Mercedes whips past a sign reading "LAS VEGAS, 52
MILES".

INT. MERCEDES - (MOVING) - DAY

Jane's driving; Robin's dozing. Suddenly a BEEPER goes
off. Jane, not wanting to wake Robin, searches for it,
thinking it's some car function, flicks all the buttons.
Robin wakes up.

JANE

What is it, I can't find it.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ROBIN

It's me.

She opens the glove compartment. There's a timer in there. She turns it off, then takes an assortment of pills -- seven in all -- with a bottle of water.

JANE

Any Valium?

ROBIN

What doctor's going to think
I'm too hyped up?

JANE

Worth a try.

Robin smiles, goes back to sleep. Jane wonders about the pills. MUSIC UP.

EXT. SMALL LAS VEGAS MOTEL - DAY (MOS)

Late afternoon. Robin, dressed for the night, comes out of her door, Jane out of the one next to it. They get into the Mercedes.

EXT. LAS VEGAS CASINO - NIGHT (MOS)

AT THE SLOT MACHINES Robin is very lucky; Jane much less so. Jane's been feeding a machine; she gives up in disgust and moves down the line. Robin takes up Jane's former position, puts a quarter in, and the machine pays off. Robin smiles, gives Jane a plastic tub of quarters.

A STAGE SHOW. Robin, her back to the stage, is talking a mile a minute to Jane, whose eyes keep drifting up to the half-naked women on the stage. She keeps forcing her attention back to Robin, who's oblivious...

INT. LAS VEGAS CASINO - BLACKJACK TABLE - NIGHT (MOS)

Jane's playing, with Robin coaching. Against her better judgment, Jane listens to her -- and wins big. She wants to play some more, but Robin drags her away...

EXT. SMALL VEGAS MOTEL - NIGHT

MUSIC DOWN. The women return. Jane's lighting a cigarette as she gets out of the car. She leans against the hood, looks at the desert sky while Robin says goodnight, goes inside.

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CONTINUED:

Jane smokes a little, then remembers she's got a set of keys to the car. She goes inside loudly to get them, then sneaks back out quietly. She starts the car. But THE ALARM COMES ON. She's freaked. Robin comes out, turns off the alarm, then arms it again. She also hands Jane an ashtray. Jane looks at her sourly, then taps some ash on the hood of the Mercedes, goes into her room. LOUD MUSIC FADES UP...

FOOTAGE: SUPER-8 TRANSFERRED TO VIDEO-8

MUSIC. The ten-year old Robin, her brother, and her mother, at the lip of the Grand Canyon. Suddenly, the video playback stops, and we discover we're looking...

THROUGH THE LENS OF THE VIDEO-8 CAMERA

And beneath us we see the Grand Canyon. We see the Colorado River at the bottom, then we go up the canyon walls to the top. We see a visitor's parking lot, an information center, and a small cinderblock building that contains restrooms. A FAT HOUSEWIFE is coming TOWARDS CAMERA, waving at us.

JANE

Jane takes the video camera from her eyes, pulls the headphones from her ears, REDUCING THE MUSIC to a tinny sound.

FAT WOMAN

Ma'am! Is that your friend in there?

JANE

What?

FAT WOMAN

She's not feeling well.

INT. GRAND CANYON VISITOR'S CENTER - RESTROOM - DAY

Jane rushes in.

JANE

Robin? You okay?

Robin's at the sink washing her face. On the counter above her, her usual array of pills.

ROBIN

That stupid woman. I told her I was fine.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JANE
You look like shit.

ROBIN
(quickly putting away
her medicines)
Something I ate.

JANE
It's this, isn't it? I mean,
it's upsetting you. Your
brother and everything.

ROBIN
No. Yeah, maybe. Do you mind
if we just go on? I can sleep
in the car.

JANE
Sure. I'm over this. It's
your basic big crack. Come on.

EXT. MERCEDES - (MOVING) - DAY

Late afternoon. Speeding along Interstate 40.

EXT. GAS STATION - DUSK

Robin's pulled up to the full serve, and as gas is being pumped into her car, an Attendant is washing her windows with a squeegee. Robin, paper towel in hand, is following him, touching up the places he misses.

Jane is watching this from the PHONE BOOTH.

JANE
(into phone)
Holly! Hey, it's Jane. Yeah,
well, we're here, like an hour
away. What are you doing
tonight?
(beat; puzzled)
No, I said Tuesday or
Wednesday. Why, is this a bad
time?
(beat)
No, we don't need a place to
stay. I just want to see you.
What about tomorrow? Sure. I
got your address. Are you
okay, Holly? Is it Nick?
Okay, fine. See you around
eleven.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

She hangs up, a little puzzled.

EXT. ALBUQUERQUE MOTEL - NIGHT

Jane, just out of the shower, in robe and towel, opens the door. She's smoking a cigarette. It's Robin.

ROBIN

Are you getting HBO? We're supposed to get HBO and it's not on mine.

JANE

I don't know, check.

Robin goes to the TV, turns it on.

ROBIN

"The Way We Were" is on.
(off Jane's blank look)
Barbra Streisand, Robert Redford. "The Way We Were".

JANE

I don't go much lately.

ROBIN

It was twenty years ago -- oh, great, you got it. Do you mind? We can switch rooms.

JANE

Go ahead.
(indicating headphones)
I've got these.

ROBIN

I ordered pizza.

Robin settles on the bed. Jane puts on the headphones, picks up a magazine.

LATER

The women still watching. Jane's earphones are off. A pizza has arrived, is half-eaten. ON THE TV SCREEN, Streisand and Redford.

STILL LATER

THE TV SCREEN shows the last scene: Katie saying hello and goodbye to Hubbell at the Plaza in New York.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Robin's eyes are red from crying. Jane is smoking, watching. THE MOVIE ENDS. Robin turns off the TV.

ROBIN

That really gets me, the way
she like brushes his hair off
his forehead. Kills me.

JANE

Was she into control or what?
I mean, get a life, hon.

ROBIN

She just wanted him to be the
best he could be.

JANE

(eating some pizza)
Gee, that'd be fun to come home
to.

ROBIN

You got some...
(she touches her chin)
... pizza here.

JANE

(wipes her chin,
missing the spot)
Thanks.

ROBIN

No, you... over here.

Jane gets up, looks at herself in the mirror. Playing,
she wipes again, missing it.

JANE

Good, thanks.
(mock-earnest)
You can see for yourself I'm
front-office material. Do I
get the job?

Robin catches on. She smears some pizza sauce on her
cheek.

ROBIN

(mock-romantic)
You know, babe, I think I'm
falling for you. What,
something wrong?

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ROBIN (CONT'D)
(laughing, wiping off
her chin)

God.

They start to clean up the room.

JANE
(indicating the TV)
So, which one were you? The
girl who loved too much or the
guy who didn't?

ROBIN
Neither. It's been a dull
life.

JANE
(casually)
What's the matter, don't you
like guys?

ROBIN
You mean...? Ew. No.

JANE
(veiling her reaction)
Just kidding.

ROBIN
Maybe I frighten them away.

JANE
Yeah, but if you're real nice
to me I'll give you some makeup
tips.

(beat)
Is that the real reason you
left L.A.? Not some mid-life
stuff. Some man done you
wrong.

ROBIN
Something like that.

JANE
Is he back East?

ROBIN
I don't know. I've tried to
find him. I need to.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ROBIN (CONT'D)

(getting up)

Eight o'clock tomorrow okay? I
want to get to Four Corners by
noon.

JANE

Sure. Night.

ROBIN

Night.

She leaves. Jane closes the door, thinking...

EXT. FOUR CORNERS MONUMENT - DAY

The point where Utah, Colorado, Arizona, and New Mexico
meet. Jane is taking a picture of Robin with her feet
in two of the states, her hands in the other two...

EXT. MERCEDES - (DRIVEBY) - DAY

On New Mexico's Interstate 40. It passes a sign
reading, "Albuquerque, 37 Miles."

JANE (V.O.)

Holly? Well, she's only 22,
maybe. She's an interest more
than a friend, you know. She
used to see one of the guys I
sang with, and we've just kept
in touch. Can you get me some
gum?

INT. MERCEDES - (MOVING) - DAY

Jane's pointing to her purse. Robin digs through it for
some gum.

ROBIN

You just drop me off downtown
for a couple hours.

JANE

You're welcome to come; it's
just, I'm her Big Sister. Now
she's with this real asshole
she met through me and I think
she needs a shoulder to cry on.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ROBIN

That's nice. I don't have any girlfriends. It's from my mom. She always felt, you know, you can't trust women.

JANE

I don't know about that.

ROBIN

Oh come on. Men know all about periods. Somebody talked.

(she finds the gum)

Ah!

EXT. SMALL HOUSE, ALBUQUERQUE - DAY

Early afternoon. Jane parks the Mercedes outside a small house; she and Robin get out. She honks the horn. Robin stretches her legs while Jane goes up to the house. She knocks, smiles back at Robin, then frowns. She hears RAISED VOICES from inside the house.

JANE

Holly? It's Jane. Holly?

She's about to knock again when the door opens. It's Holly, looking harried, distracted. She's white, just over twenty, effortlessly sexy.

HOLLY

Hi, hi.

(half-closing the door
behind her)

How you doing? You look good.

JANE

You too -- what's wrong?

NICK (O.S.)

(calling from inside)

Holly!

HOLLY

Look, something's come up, Nick's in a mood -- can we do this another time?

JANE

Hey, we're on the road.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JANE (CONT'D)
(she turns to Robin,
holds up a finger)
It's two hours for lunch, he
can deal with it -- I'll tell
him.
(pushing past Holly
into the house)
Hey, Nick!

HOLLY
(following her)
- Jane -- -

INT. SMALL HOUSE, ALBUQUERQUE - DAY

Books on the floor, cushions off the sofa. Someone has
torn the place apart.

JANE
Jesus.

From down the hall, Nick calls:

NICK
Holly!

HOLLY
He thinks he's lost something.

JANE
I thought he was clean.

HOLLY
He is, he's got nine months in
N.A., he's just dealing, that's
all. And then if he drinks at
all, he gets confused.

Nick enters. He's a white man, early thirties, no
genius, boiling with anger. It's clear he and Jane go
way back.

NICK
Holly -- oh, fuck, what are you
doing here?

JANE
Just passing through. Catch
you later.
(to Holly)
Come on.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

NICK

You think you're going
somewhere, babe?

JANE

Don't be a prick, man.

NICK

Stick to what you know, Jane.
That's something about you
girls I could never figure out.
What's sex like without a dick?

JANE

Hey, "babe", you tell me.

OUTSIDE - ROBIN

Takes her pills, swallows from a bottle of Evian.
Wondering what's going on, she tosses the bottle of
water into the car, heads up to the house.

OUTSIDE - AT THE FRONT DOOR

Robin HEARS JANE'S RAISED VOICE.

JANE (O.S.)

Don't fuck with her, man!

ROBIN

(calling)

Jane?

Alarmed, she opens the door.

INSIDE THE LIVING ROOM

Robin enters, sees Nick holding Holly by her upper arm.
Jane's against the wall, as if she's been pushed there.

ROBIN

(spotting Jane)

Are you all right?

NICK

Who the fuck are you?

ROBIN

(a polite smile)

Hi-how-are-you.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ROBIN (CONT'D)
(more brightly to Jane
and Holly)
Are we going?

Jane reads something in Robin's eyes: "Pretend
nothing's wrong." She quickly changes gears.

JANE
Yup.

Nick puts himself at the door.

NICK
Hey, she stole my coke. Or
"mis-laid" it if it makes you
feel better. She's not going
anywhere till she gives it up.

HOLLY
You sold it, you asshole! You
don't remember shit when you're
drinking but you sold it
Tuesday night!

NICK
Remember the last time I caught
you in a lie, Holly? Is that
how you want to play it?

ROBIN
(in tactful, real
estate mode)
Guys, guys, come on. My hunch
is our two positions are a lot
closer than we think.
(to Holly)
Who do you believe he sold it
to?

HOLLY
Frank, this guy across town, a
friend --

JANE
Nick, listen --

ROBIN
(a warning look)
Jane. Let me close this.
(to Holly)
What's his number?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HOLLY
It's on the wall.

Robin goes over to the phone. Holly points out the number. Robin dials it.

ROBIN
I'm Robin, by the way. You must be Holly.

HOLLY
- Hi. I like your hair.

ROBIN
Oh, thanks, the visor really messed with it.
(into phone)
Is Frank there? Yeah.
(holding out the phone to Nick)
Check it out.

He looks at Jane, who shrugs. He takes the phone.

NICK
(into phone)
Hey, Frank. Look. Did you score an eighth off me Tuesday night? Yeah. How much? Yeah. That's what I thought, Holly's saying you didn't. Anyway. Yeah, later.

He hangs up.

ROBIN
Okay? Fine. Let's go.

NICK
So I sold it to him. Where's the money?

HOLLY
(really pissed now)
Oh, man!

JANE
Nick, give us a break.

ROBIN
(to Holly)
Where's the money?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HOLLY

He hides it, he always does,
same three or four places, then
he forgets. I'm not telling.

ROBIN

Where?

HOLLY

I tell you to write it down,
you never do, so forget about
it!

NICK

You stole it! Jane, you know
her, she a liar and a thief,
it's not her fault, it's her
fucking nature.

(grabbing Holly by the
upper arm)

There's no trust here, that's
what fucking hurts. Where is
it?

JANE

Knock it off!

ROBIN

Nick, listen --

HOLLY

(really in pain)

Let me go!

NICK

Not till you tell me --

Suddenly, Jane's all over him, trying to pull him off
Holly. He lets go of Holly for an instant to brutally
shove Jane back. As he turns back to Holly -- Holly
strikes him in the head with a baseball bat. Nick falls
to the ground. A silence.

JANE

Christ.

Robin goes to him, feels his throat for a pulse. Holly
stares at him. She holds onto the baseball bat.

HOLLY

Did I hurt him?

Holly starts crying, moving around the body nervously,
but not kneeling and not letting go of the baseball bat.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JANE
Do you know CPR? I'll call
911.

Suddenly Nick's eyes open. He sucks in some air, starts
moaning. Jane puts down the phone.

JANE
Oh, thank God.

HOLLY
He's alive?

NICK
(brokenly)
Fucking bitch.

Holly comes at him again with the bat. Jane stops her.

JANE
What the fuck is wrong with
you!

NICK
I'm gonna kill you, Holly! I'm
gonna fucking kill you.

ROBIN
Come on, Holly, don't tease
him. And Nick, you know, God,
you've got some real
likeability issues. Now who
has tape?

LATER

Nick is taped to a chair by Robin. There's a piece of
tape over his mouth.

ROBIN
Hurry up, come on!

Jane, carrying an overnight bag, comes down the hallway
that leads to the bedrooms.

JANE
What are we, Thelma, Louise and
Curly?

ROBIN
What do you want to do, call
the police?

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ROBIN (CONT'D)

They'll arrest both of them,
there's drugs everywhere!

(re the kitchen)

What is she doing? I sent her
for water.

KITCHEN

Holly's at the freezer, unwrapping a foil package.
There are two lids of grass, two glass bottles of coke,
and a bundle of cash.

JANE

God damn it, Holly.

HOLLY

Just the cash, I'm clean.

JANE

It's drug money. We're not
going to have drug money in the
car.

HOLLY

It's not like you can tell by
looking at it.

JANE

(opening the overnight
bag)

We'll take half. And the drugs
stay.

(indicating the glass
of water)

Get in there.

THE LIVING ROOM

Robin is putting six CDs into a cartridge when Holly
joins her with the glass of water.

ROBIN

(to Nick)

Okay, we'll take the gag off
when we leave. There'll be
four hours of loud music, and
then you can scream for help.
Meanwhile, work on the tape.
Okay? Phone's in the kitchen.
Water -- thanks, hon -- right
here.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ROBIN (CONT'D)
(to Holly)
Go to the bathroom, we don't
want to stop.

Jane enters with the overnight bag. She closes blinds,
straightens up, as she mutters under her breath.

JANE
Fucking blondes, man. They are
out there.

Robin turns on the STEREO. LOUD MUSIC FLOODS the room.
Holly comes back from the bathroom carrying a Polaroid
camera. She unbuttons her shirt halfway, shows Nick her
breasts, wiggles them for him, sticks out her tongue.

ROBIN
Don't tease the animals.

HOLLY
Can I do the gag?

She rips the gag off Nick, who yelps in pain. She holds
out the camera, snaps a picture of her and Nick. Beyond
fury, he tries to bite her.

HOLLY
I hope this teaches you a
lesson.

Nick ROARS.

EXT. SMALL HOUSE, ALBUQUERQUE - DAY

Robin, Jane, and Holly hurry from the house. They pile
into the car and it takes off.

INT. MERCEDES - (MOVING) - DAY

As it peels out of the driveway. All three women say
nothing, but Holly smiles at Robin in the rear view
mirror. Robin smiles back. Jane, shocked, can't
believe it.

JANE
I'm not going over a cliff for
you two, so don't ask.

EXT. MERCEDES - (DRIVEBY) - DAY

The Mercedes flies by on Interstate 40 towards Oklahoma
City...

INT. SMALL HOUSE, ALBUQUERQUE - DAY

LOUD MUSIC. Nick struggles with his bonds. He's making progress with the tape around his hands...

INT. MERCEDES - (MOVING) - DAY

Holly sits in the back; Jane drives, Robin navigates.

HOLLY

I've got friends in Tulsa --
you remember Linda. I can stay
with her. Where are you going?

ROBIN

Philadelphia, New York.

JANE

And you're not coming.

HOLLY

Gosh, bummer.

JANE

What did you ever see in that
guy?

HOLLY

A lot of that back there was
drugs, they really fuck him up.

ROBIN

(helping her out)

But he's a nice guy underneath.

HOLLY

Well... I wouldn't go that far.

JANE

(to Robin)

Sex. He's great in bed.

HOLLY

Sometimes, I don't know...
there's something beyond sex,
you know?

JANE

Yeah. Me.

HOLLY

One thing for sure, I certainly
didn't like his attitude. I'm
gonna think long and hard
before I take him back.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HOLLY (CONT'D)
Is there anything to eat?

Jane looks at Robin, who doesn't share her indignation.
She just smiles.

INT. SMALL HOUSE, ALBUQUERQUE - DAY

Nick frees his hands. He bends to untape his feet. He stands up. He goes over to the CD player and turns it off. SILENCE. He's rubbing the back of his head. He moves to the kitchen shakily. We see him standing at the sink. He pours himself a glass of water. Then he collapses, grabs the sink for support, then falls to the ground. THE PHONE RINGS. The machine picks it up.

BUYER'S VOICE
(through machine)
Hey, Nick. I'll be by tonight,
okay? Maybe seven. See you.

But we know Nick isn't hearing this. We can see from his open, unblinking eyes he's dead.

EXT. OKLAHOMA GAS STATION - DAY

Jane fills the car while Robin stretches. They both watch Holly, who's flirting with the cashier.

JANE
Look at her. It's
pathological.

ROBIN
She's young.

JANE
How are you feeling?

ROBIN
Little tired.

JANE
You were good in there. Must
have sold a lot of houses.

ROBIN
It was kind of fun. Adrenalin,
whew. It's only for another
twelve hours.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JANE

I mean, there's more to you
than meets the eye. I was
proud of you.

ROBIN

(a beat; politely)
It's a long trip. I guess I
don't need to know what you
think of me.

EXT. SMALL HOUSE, ALBUQUERQUE - NIGHT

A male BUYER parks his car outside the house. A
NEIGHBOR watering his lawn sees him. He comes to the
front door, knocks. Nothing. No sound, no lights. He
yells.

BUYER

Nick!

EXT. SMALL HOUSE, ALBUQUERQUE - BACK DOOR - NIGHT

The Buyer jimmies a lock, comes in. We FOLLOW HIM as he
moves through the house, CALLING for Nick. IN THE
KITCHEN he goes straight to the refrigerator, takes out
the foil package, helps himself to the drugs Holly left.
Then he sees Nick on the kitchen floor.

BUYER

Nick?

INT. OKLAHOMA MOTEL - JANE'S ROOM - NIGHT

Holly comes out of the shower. Jane's smoking, watching
TV.

JANE

Robin says goodnight.

HOLLY

She's really sick, isn't she?

JANE

This chronic fatigue syndrome,
it comes and goes. I've read
articles. You want to try
Linda again?

HOLLY

I been thinking -- why don't
you guys just take me to the
airport tomorrow?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JANE

We're three hours to Tulsa by car.

(as Holly says nothing)

Shit. You're going back.

HOLLY

Might as well.

JANE

What for? Look at the way he treated you. That can't be love.

HOLLY

Yeah, maybe.

JANE

Anyway, he'll kill you. We tied him up. We humiliated him, it's going to be pay-back time.

HOLLY

Jane, like thanks but I can't be the way you want me to be. Like we've been there.

JANE

Fine.

HOLLY

But you guys have been great. I really like Robin. She's not gay, though.

JANE

So?

HOLLY

So nothing. I just hope you --

JANE

Do you mind? I'm watching this.

She turns back to the TV. Holly towels her hair, watches her.

EXT. SMALL HOUSE, ALBUQUERQUE - FRONT LAWN - NIGHT

The Neighbor watering his lawn sees the Buyer run out the front door, jump in his car. The front door has been left open. The Neighbor waits a beat, then approaches.

INT. SMALL HOUSE, ALBUQUERQUE - NIGHT

The Neighbor enters, calling for Nick. In the kitchen, he sees Nick on the floor.

NEIGHBOR

Man.

He thinks a beat, then goes to the freezer, steals two foil-wrapped packets of cocaine, puts them in a Tupperware container, and throws it out the back door into his own backyard. Then he picks up the phone, dials the police.

NEIGHBOR

(into phone)

Someone killed my neighbor.

INT. OKLAHOMA MOTEL - ROBIN'S ROOM - NIGHT

Robin wakes up, covered in sweat. She knows this routine. She dabs at her face with a towel she placed on the night stand before going to bed, then strips the sheets from the bed.

INT. SMALL HOUSE, ALBUQUERQUE - NIGHT

The police are there, taping the body, photographing, dusting for fingerprints. A Policeman finds the cocaine in the freezer, slips one of the foil packets into his pocket, bags another as evidence. As he closes the door he sees a photo held by a magnet of Holly and Nick...

EXT. TULSA AIRPORT - PASSENGER DROP-OFF - DAY

Robin and Holly hug goodbye; Jane, scowling, won't get out of the car.

ROBIN

Take care of yourself.

HOLLY

You, too, you don't look so hot. Bye, Jane!

JANE

Bye.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ROBIN

We've got time to have coffee.

JANE

Hey, I got a job in New York.

HOLLY

She's such a worry-wart.
She'll get over it. Bye,
Robin. Thanks.

She lugs her bag into the airport. Robin watches her,
then gets in. Jane immediately drives off.

INT. MERCEDES - (MOVING) - DAY

As they drive on the AIRPORT ROAD out of the airport,
Jane tries, unsuccessfully, not to look in her rear-view
mirror.

ROBIN

It's her life.

JANE

She puts us all a step back,
you know? That kind of hung-
up-on-a-bad-guy stuff.

Robin nods, looks at the back seat. It's got a
newspaper all over it, plus a McDonald's bag. Robin
leans back, starts to clean it up.

ROBIN

Mmmm. Where'd she get an
Albuquerque paper?

JANE

The motel news stand.
Homesick.

As Robin tidies up the paper:

ROBIN

Oh my God!

JANE

What?!

ROBIN

Turn back, turn back! Go on!

EXT. AIRPORT ROAD - DAY

The Mercedes swerves on the road, makes a dangerous U-turn.

INT. MERCEDES - (MOVING) - DAY

Both Robin and Jane are yelling.

JANE

What the fuck's wrong with you?

ROBIN

He's dead! Nick's dead!

INT. TULSA AIRPORT - DAY

Jane enters the airport with Robin, already winded, behind her. Robin reads a TV monitor.

ROBIN

Gate 22. Go on, I'll catch up!

INT. TULSA AIRPORT - GATE 22 - DAY

But there are no passengers at the gate. Jane sees a GATE CLERK at the desk.

JANE

The flight to Albuquerque?

The GATE CLERK points to the window behind her. The plane to Albuquerque is backing away from the gate.

AIRLINE PERSON

Sorry.

JANE

Can I get a message to someone on board? Don't they have plane phones or whatever?

AIRLINE PERSON

Not till they're airborne. If it's an emergency --

HOLLY

(from behind her)

Hey, what's going on?

She turns, sees Holly standing there with her luggage.

JANE

What happened?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HOLLY

I got bumped. They gave me
\$200.00. Isn't that great?

Robin, breathing hard, carrying the folded Albuquerque
newspaper, joins them.

ROBIN

Thank God.

HOLLY

What's wrong?

Robin hands her the section of the paper. Holly reads
it, looks up at them, uncomprehending, helpless.

HOLLY

Ew.

INT. TULSA AIRPORT BAR - DAY

Robin has coffee, Jane a bloody Mary, and Holly
something with umbrellas and fruit.

HOLLY

I can't believe it. He was
alive when we left him, wasn't
he? I have pictures. Would
they help?

(she sips)

Poor Nick. He was such a nice
guy. Once in a while.

JANE

Yeah, well, you better drop the
nice guy stuff. They got to
think it was self-defense. It
was self-defense, sort of.

HOLLY

Who's "they"?

JANE

The police in Albuquerque.

HOLLY

(to Robin)

She wants me to go back there?
Now? I couldn't! The
memories...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JANE

The memories! You're worried
about the fucking memories!

ROBIN

Does she have to go back? I
mean, why don't we pretend we
didn't see it?

JANE

Are you kidding?

ROBIN

She's right, he was alive when
we left him. How do we know
that what she did killed him?

HOLLY

Maybe he tripped and hit his
head on the bat again, that
could happen.

JANE

Nope, you're going back. You
don't want to fuck with the
police.

HOLLY

But they'll put me in jail! I
can't be in jail, not with the
baby.

A pause.

ROBIN

What baby, honey?

HOLLY

I'm eight weeks pregnant.

JANE

You were going to bring a baby
into that house?

HOLLY

What were my options?

JANE

Like, abortion?

HOLLY

I'd feel like a murderer!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JANE
(losing it)
You are a murderer! What am I,
nuts here?

ROBIN
Jane, it was self-defense.

HOLLY
Oh God. To think it's possible
I killed my baby's daddy...

JANE
Possible?! You took a baseball
bat to him!

HOLLY
No, I mean it's possible Nick
was the daddy.

Another beat as Robin and Jane exchange a look.

ROBIN
We have time. Let's just keep
going. We never saw the
newspaper. She hit him in
self-defense, she split, she's
never going to see him again.
I'll call our lawyer in
Connecticut. He'll tell us
what to do. If we have to go
back, we'll say we came as soon
as we found out.

HOLLY
Poor Nick. You know, I just
thank God it wasn't suicide, he
used to talk that way
sometimes. I don't think I
could live with the guilt of
that...

JANE
(weakly)
Another round?

EXT. RT. 44 - MERCEDES - (DRIVEBY) - DAY

The car zips past a sign reading "ST. LOUIS, 160 MILES."

INT. MERCEDES - (MOVING) - DAY

SEVERAL CUTS OF MUSIC: Jane's demo tape. As Robin listens to it on the Walkman, we HEAR it too, and SEE the view from Robin's window: farms, horses, silos, kids waiting for school buses. Then, we HEAR a silence, then a buzz, then:

STEVE'S VOICE

What's the hold-up?

JANE'S VOICE

She says "love tool" twice.
What do you think, "love rod"
or -- how about "dick"? I'll
change them all, "dick, dick,
throbbing dick, dick". Simple,
direct -- Hey! Lemme see your
hands.

ON ROBIN

Now WE HEAR what Jane hears: the car RADIO. We see Robin's eyes widen as she listens to the tape on the Walkman. She looks over at Jane, who's trying to do something with her hair as she drives. Jane sees her looking at her, smiles. Robin smiles back.

EXT. INDIANA MOTEL - NIGHT

INT. JANE & HOLLY'S ROOM - BATHROOM - NIGHT

Jane sinks into the tub, closes her eyes.

INT. INDIANA MOTEL COFFEE SHOP - NIGHT

Robin and Holly are having dessert. Holly smokes while she eats.

HOLLY

See, Nick had this house with
this drummer Jane knew. And
we'd hang together. But then
Nick pissed some people off and
we ended up in Tucson.

(taking Robin's
unfinished pie)

You know, you don't eat much.
Are you feeling okay?

ROBIN

It's been a long day.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HOLLY

Tell me about it. She's been great to me. At first I thought she just liked me because of, you know.

Robin looks at her blankly.

HOLLY

Because of the gay thing.

ROBIN

Jane's gay?

HOLLY

Like, hello? You didn't know?

ROBIN

(covering)

Well, I just assumed...

HOLLY

Don't look.

Behind them, two Policemen enter, look around the restaurant. Robin and Holly freeze. Then the Policemen take a booth. Robin and Holly start breathing again.

HOLLY

She just got dumped, you know. Rebound time.

ROBIN

Oh.

HOLLY

I know. Ew. But don't worry, she'd never try anything, not after me. I told her it was real self-hating to get crushes on straight girls.

ROBIN

But this person who dumped her, she was gay, right?

HOLLY

Even with a gay girl, it's no guarantee. They're very emotional. That's about all I know about them: they love uniforms, and don't break their hearts.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ROBIN
Uniforms?

HOLLY
All kinds. Especially U.P.S.

The Waitress comes by with Jane's to-go order. Robin studies her uniform.

WAITRESS
That be all?

ROBIN
Yeah, thanks.

The Waitress leaves.

HOLLY
Not that I'm an expert. I mean, she's the only one I've ever seen. Except for the ones in the porno tapes Nick used to rent.
(her mouth trembles)
I'm sorry. Every time I think of his little ways...

Robin tries to comfort her, but she's thinking of something else...

EXT. OHIO TURNPIKE - MERCEDES - (DRIVEBY) - DAY

A sign reads, "PENNSYLVANIA TURNPIKE: 5 MILES."

INT. MERCEDES - (MOVING) - DAY

They approach the Pennsylvania Turnpike tollbooth. Jane and Robin are quiet; in the back seat Holly, wearing sunglasses, is still. They drive up to the tollbooth and take a card. The Tolltaker studies them, but that's all. They drive through. Robin and Jane smile in relief; then, from the back seat, Holly snores. Behind the sunglasses, she's been asleep...

EXT. PENNSYLVANIA TURNPIKE - MERCEDES - (DRIVEBY) - DAY

EXT. TURNPIKE HOWARD JOHNSON'S - GAS AREA - DAY

Late afternoon. The first rest area in Pennsylvania. Jane's filling the car. She looks around, sees Holly at the telephone.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JANE

Holly!

But Holly only turns, waves, keeps dialing. Jane hangs up the hose, runs to her, grabs the phone from her, hangs it up.

JANE

What the fuck are you doing?

HOLLY

Just calling a friend. I got lonely.

JANE

You can't call. You can't know he's dead.

HOLLY

(breaking down)

I'm lonely, I want my friends... I want Nick.

She turns for solace to Jane, who's uncomfortable with this display of emotion.

JANE

Come on, he was a shit. It's good you killed him -- I mean, not good but it's not like you burned a rain forest or something...

(desperate for help)

Robin?

No sign of her.

EXT. WOMEN'S RESTROOM - REST AREA GAS STATION - DAY

Jane enters.

JANE

Hey, Robin, help me out, Holly's getting misty...

She sees Robin's feet underneath a stall door, and Robin's purse on the floor, its contents scattered. No one else is in here.

JANE

Robin!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ROBIN
(muffled)
Don't come in!

JANE
What's wrong?

Suddenly there's a loud noise, and Robin falls to the ground, out cold.

JANE
Robin!

EXT. PITTSBURGH AMBULANCE - (MOVING) - NIGHT

Early evening. In the Mercedes Jane and Holly follow an ambulance whose siren BLARES as it goes through downtown streets.

EXT. PITTSBURGH - MERCY HOSPITAL - E.R. - NIGHT

Jane and Holly wait in the E.R. waiting room. A Nurse breezes by. Jane stops her.

JANE
Hey! Robin Nickerson -- how is she? When can we see her?

NURSE
Are you a family member?

JANE
She's her sister.

HOLLY
I'm her sister.

NURSE
When there's news, they'll find you.

EXT. PITTSBURGH - MERCY HOSPITAL - E.R. - NIGHT

Later. Jane's at the coffee stand. Holly's asleep. A tired doctor, SUSAN NEWBAUER, comes out, finds her.

DR. NEWBAUER
Are you Ms. DeLuca?

JANE
Yes.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DR. NEWBAUER
Susan Newbauer. She said I
should talk to you. It's
pneumonia. We'll have to keep
her a couple days.

JANE
Can I see her?

DR. NEWBAUER
Tomorrow after eleven. Just go
on up to the eighth floor,
that's the HIV ward.

JANE
HIV? You mean... HIV?

DR. NEWBAUER
Yeah.
(off her reaction)
I'm sorry, I thought you knew.
You saw her medications...

JANE
She said it was chronic fatigue
or something.

DR. NEWBAUER
She's okay, she'll be out of
here in a week.
(off Jane's face)
Would you like to be tested?

JANE
(backing away)
Hey, she's a friend, that's
all.

DR. NEWBAUER
(noticing this)
Well, friend... standing back
is worse than leaving. That's
what they tell me.

INT. MERCY HOSPITAL - EIGHTH FLOOR - NIGHT

A clock reads 2:15. The elevator doors open and Jane
steps out. No one's at the nurses station. She reads a
dry-erase chart which shows who's where. She looks
around, tiptoes down the hallway. She makes it to the
room, opens the door.

INT. MERCY HOSPITAL - ROBIN'S ROOM - NIGHT

Jane comes in. Robin's awake. There's an untouched tray of hospital food on her rolling table.

JANE
Hey. How are you?

ROBIN
Okay. I'm sorry.

JANE
What for? You didn't know this would happen.

ROBIN
I shouldn't have lied to you.

JANE
Wasn't a lie. A secret. Now we're even.

Robin pretends not to understand.

JANE
Holly told me you know I'm gay. I don't know why I didn't tell you. Don't worry, I'm not after you.

ROBIN
I'm not worried.

She starts coughing. Jane waits till she's finished.

ROBIN
Why?

JANE
Who knows? Genetics --

ROBIN
No, I mean, why aren't you after me?

JANE
You're not my type.

ROBIN
Oh.
(beat)
Is this a black-white thing?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JANE

It's a blonde thing, it's a
Carpenters thing, I don't know.
Whatever. You're safe with me.

A beat.

ROBIN

My mother doesn't know.

JANE

Shouldn't you call her?

ROBIN

I'll call her later. She'll
fly out and drive me back.
It's only ten, twelve hours to
Connecticut. I'll pay for your
flight to New York.

JANE

I called them, the gig was
cancelled. Which is a
blessing. Holly and I are
going to hang here for awhile.

ROBIN

Not on my account.

JANE

She says she's not going one
step further from Albuquerque.

ROBIN

What are we doing with that?
I'll pay for the motel.

Jane dips her finger into the mashed potatoes on Robin's
tray, dabs some near her mouth.

JANE

You better get some sleep. Go
on.

(playing)

What, something wrong?

ROBIN

(smiling weakly)

Can you give me some ice?

Jane wipes her cheek, sees the container of ice on the
night stand.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

She takes a piece with her fingers, puts it on Robin's tongue. Robin smiles. Jane smiles back, closes her eyes to indicate that Robin should sleep. Robin closes her eyes and Jane settles into her chair, watching Robin...

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

EXT. MERCY HOSPITAL - PITTSBURGH - DAY

TITLE: "THREE MONTHS LATER." WE RACK BACK to:

EXT. ROBIN'S RENTED HOUSE - WESTVIEW, PITTSBURGH - DAY

A small house on one of the characteristic steep hills of Pittsburgh. The modern city is visible behind it; but the houses on this street were built right after World War I, and it shows. This house wears its years worse than most. It's a wood-frame house, updated in the forties with asphalt shingling intended to look like brick. There are flowers in pots on the clean front porch. It's a sunny day in August...

INT. HOUSE - UPSTAIRS - DAY

Bare floors, sheet linoleum over wood, walls last painted white fifteen years ago. It's a center-hall plan: two bedrooms on either side, a bathroom at one end of the hall, a window onto the front yard on the other. On the floor outside the bathroom there's a sheet with dirty clothes on it.

Robin comes out of her bedroom with a few dirty clothes; she tosses them onto the pile. She looks better than she did three months ago, though we get the feeling she's spending less time on her appearance. Her hair is pulled into a ponytail, she's got a loose sun dress on, and she's barefoot. She's humming. Behind her, we see her bed is stripped. Her room is spotless. Flowers in a jelly jar. Her old family map of the United States thumbtacked over her bed. A dresser with a dozen pill bottles on it.

Robin goes into JANE'S ROOM, the outside of which is decorated with crepe paper and a Happy Birthday sign. It's less clinical than Robin's. There's a ghetto-blasters, lots of tapes, a cardboard keyboard for practicing, and a poster of Ella Fitzgerald. Robin strips Jane's bed, then sits down on it, rests a little. She arranges a few things on the dresser.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

There's a photograph of a chic Hispanic woman, Anna, in the frame of the mirror. Also, more birthday decorations.

Robin opens the door of HOLLY'S ROOM. It's a mess. Clothes everywhere. Robin looks at it, sighs, closes the door.

As Robin goes downstairs with the laundry, we see her Filofax propping up the short leg of the hall table.

INT. ROBIN'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

At the back of the house, Holly is on the phone when Robin enters and heads for the rust-stained washing machine on the back porch, which was closed in years ago by a workman with a lot of other things on his mind at the time. Holly's wearing a K-mart uniform.

ROBIN

I'm not going in that room,
Holly, so if you want anything
clean you bring it down here.

HOLLY

(into the phone)

No, come on. Well, take a
break. Yeah. You know where,
on Rt. 8. Okay? Okay.

(hanging up)

He's going try to stop by
tonight. I know you'll like
him.

ROBIN

I like any man who dates a
pregnant woman. I wonder about
him, but I like him. Did Anna
call?

HOLLY

Yup. She'll pick up the cake
after work. I don't know what
Jane sees in her.

(concerned)

Are those sheets damp?

ROBIN

Relax. You gotta change them
once in a while, you know.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HOLLY

Yeah, I know. I just...

Robin has seen a flyer on the refrigerator. It announces Jane's nighttime gig at the Ramada Inn Airport cocktail lounge.

ROBIN

These look good. If she could just quit the day job. Did she mention the library this morning?

HOLLY

She's going at lunch. You know there's one two blocks away. You can get your books there.

ROBIN

Downtown's better.

HOLLY

You sure I can take the car?

ROBIN

I gotta be here all day. Delivery.

HOLLY

I'm sorry you had to sell the Merc. Hope you got some good money for it.

ROBIN

You are talking to a lady of leisure. Rent's paid till Christmas.

HOLLY

I know you guys did all this for me.

ROBIN

Hey, I got a good doctor, Jane's singing, and no one knows anything about you. It's working. Now, go on. See you tonight.

Holly leaves. Robin watches her through the window as she gets into a used but well-cared for Omni.

EXT. DOWNTOWN PITTSBURGH - ESTABLISHING - DAY

INT. DOWNTOWN PITTSBURGH LIBRARY - DAY

Jane, dressed for office work, is paging through a week's worth of Albuquerque newspapers, paying particular attention to the Metro section. She sighs, relieved. Nothing again.

EXT. WESTVIEW LANES BOWLING ALLEY - NIGHT

Tuesday's League Night here. Jane is a sub on the Susan B. Anthony Professional Women's Team, but she's really there under duress. Her recent girlfriend, ANNA DURON, is the team leader. She's the chic Hispanic woman we saw in the photo in Jane's mirror. The birthday party for Jane has already happened. There's a cake in the area overlooking the lanes, paper plates, a chair with balloons tied to it. The team members, yuppies who have taken up bowling for its kitsch value, are having fun. Jane's up at bat, so to speak. She bowls. It's a strike.

JANE

(as she passes Anna,
who's keeping score)
Eat my dust, doll.

ANNA

(joking but not quite)
Well, if you're going to play
to win...

Jane threads her way through a group of women who pat her on the back, goes up the stairs to the viewing area to talk to Robin, who's sitting with Holly and a guy named ALEX -- thin, tall, wiry, long-haired.

ROBIN

Local hero, they love you.

JANE

Oh, please. This is all about
showing Anna how much they like
her. Love me, love my lounge
singer.

ALEX

What about love my lounge
singer's bartender?
(mock plaintively)
They don't even know I'm alive.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JANE

He's alive?

HOLLY

Anyone want a beer?

ROBIN

Not for me, thanks.

At Jane's nod, she goes off to the bar. Alex goes through Jane's gifts.

ALEX

There's a theme here.

JANE

(to Robin)

Girl to girl, how many makeover gift certificates does it take to insult you?

(reading a card)

Sweet. "Hope it works."

ROBIN

Oh come on, you're paranoid.

JANE

See that one there? Last week she came up to me. "Can I touch your hair?" What am I, somebody's Show-and-Tell? I don't even think they know Anna's Hispanic. She's just a brunette with a rosary --

(glancing up)

Jesus.

She has seen A UNIFORMED POLICEMAN approaching. He scans the room, then makes his way straight to Jane and Robin's table.

ALEX

My dream evening. Lesbians and cops. What's next, Republicans?

ROBIN

(undertone to Jane)

I thought you said there was nothing in the papers.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JANE

There wasn't, hasn't been since
June.

The policeman keeps on coming. He's young, big, and
fails spectacularly to give the impression of
intelligence. His badge says "LINCOLN".

LINCOLN

Evening, ladies, sir. I'm
looking for Holly Pulchik.

Alex silently, incredulously mouths, "Sir?"

ROBIN

Uh...

JANE

Who?

LINCOLN

Holly Pulchik. This height,
blonde...

ROBIN

Gee, I don't know...

HOLLY (O.S.)

Hey, you made it!

Holly comes up behind Lincoln, hugs him, a beer in each
hand.

HOLLY

I was afraid some crime'd keep
you away.

LINCOLN

It's a quiet night. Friday's
the first, though, and when
they get their checks...

Jane flashes Robin a look, stands up.

JANE

Better get back to my team.
Nice meeting you, Officer
Lincoln.

LINCOLN

Call me Abe.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JANE

Abraham Lincoln? What is this,
a crack?

HOLLY

No, it's his name. Isn't that
a coincidence? Like the
president. I wonder if his
parents realized... I mean,
like why Abraham and Lincoln
sounded good together.

LINCOLN

You must be Robin. And you're
Jane, right? Happy birthday.

JANE

Thank you. If I look happy
now, though, wait till Friday.

He doesn't get her dig. Holly sloppily feeds him a
piece of cake, then licks the icing off his mouth.

LINCOLN

Babe, come on. I'm in uniform.

HOLLY

(in love)

Isn't that neat? He takes it
so serious. We're gonna bowl a
few frames, okay?

They go off.

JANE

What is she, working her way
down a list? Guys who call
girls "babe"?

ROBIN

I hope she keeps her mouth
shut.

JANE

(watching them make
out)

Or if it's open, she's not
talking.

Anna arrives.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ANNA

We won! They want to buy you a drink but I told them we're late. Ready?

JANE

It's one of my presents.
Anna's psychic.

ANNA

She's fabulous. I mean, it's a gift, she really has it.

ALEX

(to Robin)

Can I give you a lift home?

ROBIN

I don't know -- does Holly need the car?

JANE

She's with the President --

ALEX

Look, it's on my way.

ROBIN

Okay, thanks.

(to Jane)

We'll take your gifts home.

ANNA

You're going to love this woman, Jane. She's so spiritual...

EXT. ROW HOUSE, DOWNTOWN PITTSBURGH - NIGHT

INT. LOUISE'S ROW HOUSE - NIGHT

The psychic, LOUISE, chain-smokes at a card table in her living room. A TV is on, VOLUME LOW, behind Jane and Anna, and several times during her reading she glances at it. Tarot cards are spread in a pattern on the surface of the card table, which also holds -- besides a full ashtray -- the TV remote control, a bowl of Cheetos, a People Magazine, and an empty box of Figurines. She speaks with a heavy Pittsburgh accent.

LOUISE

You're in love.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ANNA
(blushing)
Maybe I should leave.

LOUISE
(it's not you, dear)
No, you can stay.

JANE
Let's stick to fortune and
health, okay? Is anything
coming out of this gig at the
airport?

LOUISE
Health... Oh, there's a friend.
See? She's in great danger.

ANNA
Is it me? I've been a little
run-down.

LOUISE
An illness, a serious illness,
a dark cloud which follows her.
I'm so sorry. Someone has
cursed her.

ANNA
Can you remove it?

JANE
What?

ANNA
She can remove curses. That's
how I made junior partner.

JANE
You believe this crap?

LOUISE
It's very strong, I don't know.
It'll take a lot of work. Let
me ask my guides what will be
required...

She closes her eyes a minute. It's a long pause, during which Jane mouths "She's nuts" to Anna. Finally, Louise opens her eyes; coincidentally, the TV show behind Anna and Jane goes to commercial. Louise scribbles something on paper torn from The Enquirer, passes it to Jane.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JANE
(reading it)
Seven hundred dollars?!
Someone should turn you in,
lady.

ANNA
Jane!

LOUISE
I take Visa, same price as
cash.

JANE
What a racket -- I'm outta
here.
(to Anna)
I appreciate the thought. I'll
see you tomorrow.

Jane leaves.

ANNA
Jane!
(to Louise)
I'm sorry. She's... it's one
of the zero birthdays.

LOUISE
Mmm-hmmm. Anybody else on the
horizon for you, dear?

ANNA
Why do you ask?

LOUISE
Oh, no reason.

EXT. ROBIN'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Jane pulls the car into the back of the house. A police
car is parked there. The light in the kitchen is on.
There's a red light visible upstairs in Holly's bedroom.

INT. ROBIN'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

The clock reads midnight. It's a hot night. Robin's
pouring herself a beer. She reaches for another glass.

ROBIN
Want some?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JANE

Sure, great. You don't drink.

ROBIN

You have a good time with Anna?

JANE

Yeah. What about Alex?

ROBIN

He's nice. He's gonna come over Saturday and help with the house.

They hear MALE LAUGHTER and a SHRIEK from Holly above them.

JANE

I can't believe it's a cop.

ROBIN

He's cute, though, huh?

JANE

For a cop. Cute-wise, you gotta grade 'em on a curve.

ROBIN

He does have a nice heiny.

We begin to think Robin's the slightest bit tipsy.

JANE

Heiny? What is he, two years old? Ass, hon. He's got a nice ass. Nice basket, too.

ROBIN

Ew.

JANE

Oh come on, I saw you checking it out. What do you call it?

ROBIN

I don't call it anything. I just wasn't brought up to talk about a person's anatomy.

JANE

You can't even say the words. You probably don't even have words for it.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ROBIN

That's ridiculous. I can too.
It just doesn't often come
up...

JANE

So to speak.
(pointing to her lap)
Okay, what's this?

ROBIN

Your lap?

JANE

You know what I mean.

ROBIN

(being very brave)
I'm not going to say pussy, if
that's what you're after.
Okay? I hate that. That's a
guy word.

JANE

So what do you call it?

ROBIN

(thinks)
"Down there".

JANE

"Down there?"

ROBIN

Well, vagina seems so formal.

JANE

"Down there?" Jesus, what do
you call the basement?

ROBIN

Okay, okay. Honestly? Fine.
(breath, embarrassed)
"Hoo-hoo" or "cissy".

JANE

Cissy? Like Buffy, Jody,
and...?

ROBIN

That's what my mother called
it.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ROBIN (CONT'D)

I had a cissy or a hoo-hoo and
my brother had a noodle or a
dingle.

JANE

And that's what you still call
it? This explains so much
about white sex.

ROBIN

Well, it's better than pussy.
Or beaver, I never got that,
what's that about? Or worse...

She stops, knowing she's made a mistake.

JANE

What's worse?

ROBIN

You know. I'm not saying it.

Jane has her fingers in her beer. She flicks them at
Robin.

JANE

Go on, take a chance. You
gotta take over the oppressor's
language. It's liberating.

ROBIN

I don't think so.

JANE

(flicks her again)
Come on, say it, real fast.
Let go.

ROBIN

(picking up her glass)
I'll do it, I promise.

JANE

(picking up her glass)
Come on, come on. C-U-N-T.

ROBIN

(trying to be serious)
There is a policeman within the
sound of my voice --

Jane has her backed into a corner. Robin drops her
glass. Jane begins to pour the beer over Robin's head.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JANE

It's the only way to save
yourself. Come on.

ROBIN

Okay. Okay. You are such a
baby.

(quickly, almost
inaudibly)

Cunt.

JANE

I didn't hear you.

ROBIN

All right, all right, all
right! C-U-N-T, cunt! Cunt
cunt cunt cunt cunt!

There's a big silence. Even the noise from upstairs
stops. Robin claps a hand over her mouth. Jane smiles.

JANE

Nice mouth.

ROBIN

Look, I'm a mess. Throw me the
dishtowel. God.

(as she dries her hair;
sing-song:)

Cunt, cunt, cunt, cunt, cunt.
You know, you were right, I
feel, I don't know. Different.

JANE

You're ready for the ball,
Eliza.

They sit and relax for a moment, then notice the light
above them swinging slightly, and there's a rhythmic
creaking coming from the room above them. Robin notices
she's tapping her hands on the table in time to the
creaking. She stops herself.

ROBIN

That can't be good for the
baby.

JANE

They'll probably take a short
break during delivery.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JANE (CONT'D)
(watching Robin's face)
You miss it?

ROBIN
What?

JANE
Sex.

ROBIN
Yeah. I do.

JANE
The chick misses noodle big
time.

ROBIN
(smiling)
You know what's weird? You
never know the last time you
sleep with someone it's the
last time. You're thinking,
well, we got problems, we got
work to do, but you just don't
think... And then you break up
and about a month later you
think back and you go, God,
that was it. That Tuesday or
Friday or whenever, and you
wish you'd paid attention.
Because that was the last time.

There's a beat as they both listen to the sounds above
them. Then:

JANE
Thanks for my birthday gift.
You can never have enough gag
t-shirts.

ROBIN
I know, I'm sorry. It's
just... doing this house up is
gonna take everything. Happy
birthday. Oh, your mail's in
the living room. Well, good
night. I drank too much.

She kisses her on the cheek, leaves. Jane lights up a
cigarette, idly pours herself another beer.

INT. ROBIN'S HOUSE - UPPER HALLWAY - NIGHT

Robin, now dressed for bed, sits on the edge of the bed, listens to Jane's movements below.

INT. ROBIN'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Jane's finished with the dishes. She turns out the light, goes into the living room.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

She gets her mail on the hall table. But something's different in the room. She feels something there behind her. She turns, SEES A PIANO, a ribbon bow on top. She stops, goes to it for a moment. It's an upright, used but still good. She sits down. There's a card from Robin. She reads it. Whatever it says (we don't read it), it moves her. She opens the keyboard, puts her fingers on the keys. Starts to play.

INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - NIGHT

Robin HEARS Jane's music. She smiles, gets into bed.

CLOSEUP - JANE'S HANDS

on the keyboard, and now we HEAR HER VOICE. PULL BACK TO SHOW we're in:

INT. AIRPORT RAMADA COCKTAIL LOUNGE - NIGHT

Jane's at the piano before a small crowd of tired businessmen. She smiles across the room at Alex, behind the bar. She finishes her song to polite applause.

JANE

Thank you for joining us at
Ramada Inn's Flight Deck
Lounge. Good night...

She gets up, casts a sour glance at her nearly empty brandy snifter tip glass, then crosses to the bar.

AT THE BAR

Alex has a glass of water waiting for her.

ALEX

Nice set.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JANE

(as she picks up the
drink)

Thanks. Did you have a good
time last night?

ALEX

Okay. I mean, not much for me
there.

JANE

- Well, Robin. Did you like her?

ALEX

She's got a real "back off"
thing going.

JANE

Yeah? Well, she likes you.

ALEX

Yeah?

JANE

She's just... she's shy. And
nowadays, you know, AIDS and
everything...

ALEX

She ever heard of safe sex?

JANE

Have you?

ALEX

You forget easy. My old
girlfriend's positive. IV
user. I told you this...

JANE

Oh yeah, right. Well, she
thought you were cute. You're
coming Saturday?

ALEX

I am now.

JANE

Great.

(pushing him the empty
glass)

Look, maybe I shouldn't be
telling you this...

EXT. ROBIN'S HOUSE - DAY

E.C.U. of the asphalt mock-brick shingling. PULL BACK as the shingling is torn from the house, revealing the wood siding and black adhesive beneath. Alex, shirtless, in shorts, is on a ladder. Below him are Holly, Abe, Robin, Anna and Jane. Also with them is MR. VOGEL, the 75-year-old owner of the house, who leans on a cane and squints anxiously up at the proceedings.

ALEX

It comes off pretty easy.

Robin seems to be looking more at Alex's legs than at the shingling. She's wearing work gloves.

ROBIN

Just throw it down.

ALEX

It's the adhesive that'll take time, scraping that. And the nails'll be a bitch.

Alex throws down the shingling, which Robin gathers and puts in a wheelbarrow. Jane takes some tools to the bottom of the house and begins removing shingling there, scraping adhesive. Mr. Vogel studies the shingling in the barrow.

JANE

Anybody other landlord'd give us a couple months rent-free.

VOGEL

We paid top dollar for this. This could be sold.

JANE

(flatly)

Oy.

EXT. ROBIN'S HOUSE - SIDE YARD - DAY

Now Jane's on the ladder, up near a second-floor window. As she pulls shingling from the side of the house, she looks inside the window.

JANE'S POV THROUGH WINDOW - HOLLY'S BEDROOM

A chair with Abe's uniform, his holster and gun, draped over it. Beyond, almost out of sight, a bed and moving sheets...

EXT. ROBIN'S HOUSE - SIDE YARD - DAY

Mr. Vogel walks around the house, tapping the siding, making an owner's inspection, till he reaches a newly-exposed part of the siding. There is a heart painted forty years ago with the black adhesive on the day the shingling was attached. It reads "P.V. & C.V."; by it are handprints, a man's and a woman's. Mr. Vogel reaches over, touches the woman's handprint.

Robin watches.

INT. ROBIN'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

Late afternoon. Anna, dressed in summer white linen, watches TV -- "Calamity Jane" with Doris Day -- while she slowly, delicately shucks corn. While she shucks, others, hot and sweaty, pass through for drinks of water, an extra hammer, a Band-Aid. She doesn't seem to notice a disparity between their level of activity and hers.

EXT. ROBIN'S HOUSE - BACKYARD - DAY

Late, late afternoon. Alex is cooking hot dogs on the grill. Robin and Jane are setting a picnic table.

ROBIN

He's nice, isn't he?

JANE

Alex? Yeah, sure.

ROBIN

I think he's interested in me.
Do you get that?

JANE

What the hell is Holly thinking
of, screwing a cop?

ROBIN

Maybe you should make up
something, tell him I'm seeing
someone else.

JANE

What is this, high school?
You're a big girl.
(she goes off towards
the house)
Anna! Come on, we're ready,
where's the corn? Holly! Abe!

Robin catches Alex looking at her, smiles.

EXT. ROBIN'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Late at night. The house is half-naked, half-covered with the asphalt. The dumpster out front is nearly full.

INT. ROBIN'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Jane playing her new piano.

EXT. ROBIN'S HOUSE BACK PORCH - NIGHT

Holly's is smoking a joint, looking at the battered Polaroid she took of Nick. Abe enters from the kitchen. Holly hastily slips the Polaroid into her pocket and smoothly flips the joint out onto the lawn.

ABE

Babe?

HOLLY

(holding her breath)

Hey.

ABE

Smells like marijuana out here.

HOLLY

Clove cigarettes. I got the box inside somewhere.

ABE

That's not good for the baby.

HOLLY

Yeah, well having him come out of that tiny hole's not good for me, so we're even.

ABE

Something wrong?

HOLLY

I got things on my mind.

ABE

That guy, right? Nick.

HOLLY

Who told you about him?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ABE
(looking at her
stomach)
It had to be someone. Besides,
you keep calling out "Nick" in
bed.

HOLLY
I do?
(not trying to be
funny)
Maybe it's something that
sounds like "Nick".

ABE
Does he know about the baby?

HOLLY
You know, I'm only here
temporarily, Abe. I might go
back.

ABE
I don't want to stand in your
way. But if he loves you so
much, why doesn't he call?

HOLLY
Maybe he can't get to a phone?

He smiles, kisses her, gets in his police cruiser.
Alex's car is parked next to it. Through the
loudspeaker mounted on top of the cruiser:

ABE
(loudspeaker filter)
I'll call you, babe.

EXT. ROBIN'S HOUSE - DOWNSTAIRS - NIGHT

Jane locks up. The house is quiet. From the kitchen
window, she sees Alex's car. She also sees Holly on the
grass on her hands and knees. From the back porch:

JANE
Have you seen Alex?

HOLLY
Nope.

Jane goes back inside. Holly finds the joint she threw
away earlier. She smiles.

INT. ROBIN'S HOUSE - UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - NIGHT

Jane listens outside Robin's bedroom. She hears voices. She goes into her room. Anna is there in bed.

JANE

Let's go to your place.

INT. ROBIN'S HOUSE - ROBIN'S ROOM - NIGHT

Robin and Alex are kissing lightly. His shirt is unbuttoned; her hair is loose.

ROBIN

There's something you need to know.

ALEX

Okay, but first, you know, we gotta have that talk, the condom bit and so on. We gotta be safe here.

ROBIN

That's sort of what I wanted to tell you --

ALEX

Someone I was with a couple months ago has tested positive. So you gotta assume the worst. Does that bother you?

ROBIN

No.

ALEX

So we gotta be real safe. But don't worry. If it gets dull, you let me know.

(he kisses her on the neck)

You're beautiful.

And she closes her eyes...

INT. ROBIN'S HOUSE - ROBIN'S ROOM - NIGHT

Later. Robin and Alex, lying together like spoons. Robin's awake, running her finger along his forearm.

INT. ROBIN'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

Early morning, dawn. Robin makes toast, coffee, gets a tray ready for Alex.

INT. ROBIN'S HOUSE - ROBIN'S ROOM - DAY

Robin enters with the tray, kicks the door shut behind her.

ROBIN

Here.

She gives him the coffee. He drinks it, reaches out, touches her face.

ROBIN

It's been a long time. Maybe you could tell.

ALEX

Yeah.

ROBIN

Did you have a test?

ALEX

We were safe, don't worry.

ROBIN

I don't care if you're positive. I mean, for you, I hope you're not.

ALEX

I'm negative.

ROBIN

Good. I'm not.

ALEX

I know.

He pauses slightly as he sips his coffee. That was a mistake. He can feel Robin's shock.

ALEX

I'm going to get the front done today.

ROBIN

How did you know?

ALEX

I don't know. I guess... you were nervous. I just assumed...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ROBIN

It shows, that's what you want me to believe? That's such bullshit! You knew! Someone told you!

ALEX

What difference does it make!

ROBIN

God damn it! Why did she tell you?

ALEX

It wasn't a big deal. She said you were shy and had a bad time with some guy, and I don't know, I guessed and she didn't deny it. It came out real casual, like it's just your history, like, "Hey, be careful, she's on the rebound," or something... It's just like, you know, a detail.

ROBIN

And aren't you something? The big guy. Bringing sex to the unfuckable. Giving the girl one for the road!

ALEX

Robin, baby, that's not it...

ROBIN

Get out of here.

ALEX

Come on.

ROBIN

So now I gotta beg you to go? Come on, Alex. Give me a break.

He looks at her, then, giving up, pulls on his pants, grabs his shirt, leaves.

INT. ROBIN'S HOUSE - DOWNSTAIRS HALLWAY - DAY

Late morning. Jane enters the house carrying the Sunday paper.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JANE

Hello?

(calling up the stairs)

Anybody home?

INT. ROBIN'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

Robin's cutting vegetables when Jane enters.

JANE

Oh. Hi. Alex here?

ROBIN

No. He's gone.

JANE

Oh. You have a nice time?

ROBIN

Yeah, great. Till I found out
you told him I've got HIV.

JANE

(a beat)

I didn't tell him.

ROBIN

Yeah, I know, he guessed. "You
know, she looks like the kind
of gal who tests positive for
the AIDS virus. I don't know,
she's got that kinda glow."

JANE

It slipped out. I'm sorry.
Really. Is he here?

ROBIN

What did you think? I'd never
have a man in my bed again
unless you set it up?

JANE

He likes you, I know he does --

ROBIN

That's none of your business!
My personal life has nothing to
do with you! We just live
here!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JANE

You think that's what you're doing? Living?

ROBIN

I'm not dying, Jane! I'm fighting! And you either help me or you get out!

JANE

You're hiding! You're running, and for now you feel safe here, but you'll run again when that changes! You haven't been to your doctors! Susan's called three times this week wondering where you are. You haven't even told your mother!

ROBIN

Don't you tell me how to do this! What the fuck do you know?

JANE

(trying for calm; going to her)

I understand you, Robin, I know how difficult it is, I can guess. When I think of what you face every day --

ROBIN

You pity me, that's what you do --

JANE

Honey, no --

ROBIN

(pushing her away)

Well, don't! Save it for yourself! You're with someone you can't stand, you're in love with someone you can never have --

Robin stops herself. Jane, too, has frozen.

JANE

Who? Who is it I'm in love with? You know me so well, who is it? Go ahead and say it.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JANE (CONT'D)
(when Robin says
nothing)
You stay out of my love-life,
I'll stay out of yours.

ROBIN
Not just my love-life. I think
you should move out. I'd go
myself, but I wouldn't want to
be running.

JANE
I said I was sorry.
(beat)
I'll be gone today.

She turns and leaves.

ROBIN
And take the fucking piano!
I'll leave it out in the rain
if you don't, I swear to God I
will.

EXT. ROBIN'S HOUSE - FRONT YARD - DAY

OVER THIS, JANE IS SINGING. Jane moves her suitcases
out of the house; Holly and Abe help. Robin keeps
chipping adhesive off the siding.

INT. ANNA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Anna, thrilled, empties drawers for Jane.

INT. ROBIN'S HOUSE - UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - NIGHT

Robin, her face hard against her loss, passes Jane's
open door. The room is empty.

INT. ROBIN'S HOUSE - ROBIN'S ROOM - NIGHT

Robin is on the phone. She decides. Dials a number.

ROBIN
(into phone)
Mom? Hi, it's me.

INT. ANNA'S APARTMENT - DAY

Jane is asleep. Anna, getting ready for work, is
irritated to be interrupted by the piano movers. Jane
pulls the covers over her head.

INT. RAMADA INN - FLIGHT DECK LOUNGE - NIGHT

Here is where JANE IS SINGING. She looks over at Alex, who's on the bar phone. He hangs up, shakes his head, shrugs. Jane FINISHES THE SONG to warm applause.

EXT. ROBIN'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Robin is chipping adhesive; a work light illuminates a section of the house. Holly, wearing her Target uniform, brings out a Coke.

HOLLY

Looks good.

ROBIN

Can you guys pitch in this weekend?

HOLLY

Sure. Jane called me at work. Wants to know how you are.

ROBIN

I'm fine. Stay out of it, Holly.

HOLLY

That's what I told her. She wanted my advice on the whole thing, so I told her. She's anti-lesbian.

ROBIN

I am not!

HOLLY

No, her. This is her old problem. She creates a situation where she gets this rejection everyone else sees coming, and then she gets to hate herself.

ROBIN

She doesn't hate herself.

HOLLY

It's all self-worth, like what isn't? You keep getting yourself in trouble, you have to look at that.

Robin looks at Holly's stomach, refrains from saying anything, indicates a scraper on the table.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ROBIN

Hand me that, would you? It's not that complicated, really. It's not that she told him. But she was gonna let me think one thing while she knew the truth. She wasn't honest with me.

HOLLY

(making a joke, which she enjoys)
Straight with you.

ROBIN

You can't live a lie, she should know that. I should know that.
(beat)
Did I tell you my Mom's visiting? With the guy she's dating.

HOLLY

There's lying and there's just not telling everything you know.

ROBIN

Big diff.

She goes on painting. Holly thinks.

INT. ROBIN'S HOUSE - HOLLY'S ROOM - NIGHT

Obviously after wild sex. Abe is on his back, exhausted. Holly, nude, has a sheet wrapped around her round stomach. She's wearing Abe's police cap and trying, by pressing hard, to get his badge to stick to her sweaty breast.

ABE

Hey, babe. Marry me.

HOLLY

Get real.

ABE

I'm serious.

HOLLY

Get out of town.
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HOLLY (CONT'D)
(managing to stick on
the badge)

Look.

ABE
(amiably)
"Freeze, suckers."

The badge falls off. Holly toys with it as:

HOLLY
I can't marry you, Abe.

ABE
What is it?
(indicating her
stomach)
You're not over him.

HOLLY
We're all over him. Like six
feet over him.

INT. ROBIN'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Robin sits with a mug of tea and a bottle of AZT. She looks at the empty space on the wall. She gets up, moves the couch over there. She goes back, picks up the phone. She dials. Hangs up.

INT. ROBIN'S HOUSE - HOLLY'S ROOM - NIGHT

Holly's finished her story. Abe is struggling to take it in.

ABE
He's dead?

HOLLY
Yeah. I mean, we followed it
in the papers for awhile. They
were looking for me, but it
stopped. I have to be real
careful of tickets and stuff.
I don't want to be pulled over
for anything.
(beat)
So, no secrets. Feel free to
tell me anything.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ABE

I was going to tell you about
something on last year's taxes.

HOLLY

See? We're only human.

(beat)

Is it that bad?

ABE

It's not good.

HOLLY

It was an accident. Or self-
defense. I wouldn't kill
someone on purpose, like in
cold blood. Hey, you ever see
that movie?

ABE

Shhh. Let's go to sleep.

HOLLY

You don't want to marry me now.

ABE

Hey. We're together. That's
not changing. Come here.

(taking off the cap)

That's not really allowed.

He cradles her in his arms. She snuggles close in to
him, closes her eyes. But he's awake, drawing circles
on her skin.

INT. ROBIN'S HOUSE - DAY

Robin stands at a window, looking out onto the street.

FLASHBACK

Super-8 footage of Robin and Tommy and Elaine on their
cross-country trip.

BACK TO ROBIN

She's nervous. She shakes the vision out of her head.
Sees a car approaching. Checks herself in the mirror,
goes downstairs.

EXT. ROBIN'S HOUSE - DAY

A Cadillac Seville drives up. Robin goes out to meet her mother ELAINE and JERRY, Elaine's sixtyish boyfriend. Elaine looks well-cared-for, elegant, bright. She smiles at Robin.

ELAINE
Look at you, honey!

ROBIN
(hugging her)
Mom.

ELAINE
They gave us a terrible map at Hertz. And the A/C is n.g., isn't it, Jer? I like it so you need a sweater.

Jerry is patiently unloading luggage.

JERRY
It's two days, it'll be fine.
I'm Jerry.

ELAINE
Oh, sorry. Jerry, my daughter.
Robin, Jerry.

ROBIN
Hi. I told her you didn't need to rent a car, I could've picked you up.

ELAINE
You know me, I'm so damn independent, riding in other people's cars, forget it. Isn't this nice? Is that forsythia -- Jerry, look -- that must have been lovely a few months back.

Robin follows her mother into the house.

INT. ROBIN'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

Elaine is re-arranging the drawers.

INT. ROBIN'S HOUSE - UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - DAY

Robin comes upstairs with some towels. She stops as she sees Jerry in the bathroom, a bottle of Robin's AZT medication in his hand. He looks up guiltily.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JERRY
Sorry. Any aspirin?

ROBIN
In the kitchen.

Jerry nods, puts the bottle of pills back in the medicine chest.

INT. ROBIN'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

After dinner. Robin, Holly, Abe, Elaine and Jerry. Elaine comes into the living room, turns on a few lights. Jerry's still IN THE DINING ROOM helping out, clearing the table. On the breakfront behind him he notices a photo album.

ELAINE
You need any help, Robin?

IN THE KITCHEN

Robin is going through the drawers trying to get the coffee ready. She can't find anything; Elaine's rearranged everything.

ROBIN
No!

BACK TO THE LIVING ROOM

Abe and Holly are at the foot of the stairs.

ABE
It was nice meeting you all.

ELAINE
Aren't you joining us for coffee?

HOLLY
Well, he's on duty in a couple hours, you know?

ELAINE
Oh. Of course. Well, good night.

ABE
Night, ma'am. Sir.

He and Holly go up the stairs, at first slowly, then running. Robin enters, carrying the tray.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ROBIN

Gosh, that's a funny place for
the silverware, Mom.

ELAINE

It's where I always keep it.
It's very logical, you'll see.
(re Holly and Abe)
Will they live here when they
get married?

Up above, we hear some bedroom noise from Holly and Abe.

ROBIN

I don't think so. He's got his
own apartment.

ELAINE

Then I guess it's all falling
into place. You can't live
here alone, and Connecticut is
so lovely. The lawns are
beautiful, you can zip down to
New York, and I don't have to
tell you about the real estate.
Now Jerry's friend owns a
company that does very well --

ROBIN

I like it here, Mom.

ELAINE

Well, you're not exactly
bubbling with happiness.

ROBIN

It's a life, Mom, not a
hayride.

ELAINE

What's keeping you here? Are
you seeing someone?

ROBIN

No.

The noise from upstairs is getting rhythmic and hard to
ignore -- but they do their best.

ROBIN

I just... it's quiet here. I
want to think. Re-evaluate
things.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ELAINE

Well, that's true. I did the same thing at your age. When your father left. Think all you want, open your mind, whatever. Just don't let your real estate license lapse.

JERRY

You see this, Lainey?

Jerry brings the photo album into the living room.

ROBIN

Remember that trip across country when Daddy came home? That was the idea, re-doing that.

Elaine isn't eager to get into this. She takes the photo album; doesn't open it until Jerry does for her.

ELAINE

Yeah. Does anyone want anything? You want some more cake, Robin, you are too thin.

JERRY

I swear, you look younger now. Look.

Elaine flips through the book casually.

ELAINE

All I remember is there was nothing after Chicago. Cornfields. Population explosion, my heiny.

She stops as she comes to a pageful of photos of Tommy. A beat. She closes the book.

ELAINE

Why you'd want to make a shrine out of that trip, I don't know.

ROBIN

It seemed like a good idea at the time.

ELAINE

Look at those arms, how thin she is, Jerry.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ROBIN

It's a lot of exercise, fixing
up this place.

ELAINE

It's a rental, honey, don't
forget that. But I'm serious,
you're skin and bones --

JERRY

That's enough, Elaine. Don't
pick on her. She looks fine.
You look fine, Robin.

ELAINE

Well, pardonnez-moi.
(she makes a face at
Robin)
Travel nerves. Off his
routine.
(picking up the remote)
Isn't that rescue show on?

She turns on the TV and flips flips flips as she fingers
the album. Robin watches her, glances at where the
piano used to be, smiles at Jerry.

ELAINE

(squinting at the TV)
They did that just to get on
TV. I mean, how do you
accidentally set a dog on fire?
You have to want to do that.

EXT. ROBIN'S HOUSE - BACK YARD - DAY

Jerry and Robin are chipping paint. Elaine, on the
porch steps, is cutting a watermelon into melon balls.
Abe's police cruiser is parked in the driveway. Abe and
Holly are on the roof of the garage, sunning themselves
on towels, listening to the radio. Abe is rubbing
sunscreen on Holly's pregnant stomach. Naturally, it's
a bikini, not a maternity swimsuit.

ELAINE

So whose baby is it?

ROBIN

Ask her.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ELAINE

I'm not going to ask her, don't be ridiculous. I hope he knows what he's doing.

ROBIN

He's in love, Mom. They're getting married.

ELAINE

She's smarter than he is, then.

ROBIN

Yeah, she got her man.

ELAINE

You know, I'm a feminist too. I was a single mother, after your father left and then died. You think that was easy? I even voted for Carter twice. But you can't fight nature.

JERRY

(to Robin)

That's enough, I'll finish this.

ELAINE

But you girls keep trying, treating your men like side dishes. Or salad dressing you stick a fork in when needed. Like men used to treat us.

ROBIN

Who am I treating? You see a man here?

ELAINE

Exactly. You may not want to hear it, honey, but love's the most important thing in a woman's life. Someone who's a safe harbor. You ever have that with anyone?

ROBIN

With you, I guess. Growing up.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ELAINE
(not responding to this
avowal)
See? That you gotta change.
It's not your mother or your
friends or even your children.
It's who holds you at night.

ROBIN
And if you don't get held, you
missed the boat.

ELAINE
There'll be another one in a
minute. Always is.

Jerry, maybe hurt at this, just keeps chipping.

INT. ROBIN'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Just before dawn. Robin's alone in the kitchen,
drinking some herb tea. Jerry enters.

ROBIN
Can't sleep?

JERRY
She snores. Sinuses.

Robin smiles, makes a cup of tea for him.

JERRY
You know, I sell medical
equipment to hospitals.
Magnetic resonance imagers,
know what they are?
(off her nod)
So I keep up with medicine.
And I got a nephew, gay. I
know what AZT is. I'm sorry.

ROBIN
I'm not going to tell her. I
thought I was going to.

JERRY
She knows something's wrong.
Lainey's no fool.

ROBIN
My dad used to call her Lainey.
She never let anyone after.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JERRY

She loves you, Robin. But it scares her. Tommy, your dad. Now she'd rather love things she can replace.

ROBIN

Then she's made a mistake with you.

JERRY

She does her best.

ROBIN

That's what we're all doing. Scary, isn't it?

JERRY

(smiling)

I'm shitting my pants all day long.

He gets up. As he passes her, he puts his hand lightly on her shoulder.

INT. PITTSBURGH POLICE STATION - DAY

At his metal desk, Abe stares at a photo of himself and Holly. He's torn.

INT. ROBIN'S CAR - (MOVING) - NIGHT

Summer rain. Robin's driving, Elaine's the front seat passenger. She's looking behind her.

ELAINE

No, he's there, he made the light. You know, I'm sure we could've done it ourselves.

ROBIN

Those shuttles from the car rental place are a hassle. This'll be quicker.

(beat)

I had a good time, Mom. Maybe I'll see you guys at Christmas. Check out those job offers.

ELAINE

Well, you're happy here. It was a bad idea. There's real estate everywhere, anyway.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

It's clear that Elaine doesn't want Robin there anymore.

ROBIN

Yeah, that's right.

They drive for a beat. When Robin looks over again, Elaine is crying. She won't look at Robin.

ROBIN

Mom...

ELAINE

I know you're not well, honey,
I don't know what it is, I
don't want to know. But I know
you'll get better. You were
always the healthy one. Poor
Tommy, sick from day one, one
thing or another. But you...

ROBIN

I'll be fine, Mom.

ELAINE

I do the best I can. I'm sorry
if it's not enough.

ROBIN

No complaints here, Mom.

Elaine nods, then gets hold of herself.

ELAINE

Never complain, never explain.
Katharine Hepburn, she said
that in Redbook last month.
Good motto, isn't it?

Robin smiles, keeps driving. Elaine makes up her face.

EXT. PITTSBURGH AIRPORT - DROP-OFF POINT - NIGHT

A tight, hurried hug from Elaine, a warmer one from Jerry, and Robin gets back into her car.

INT. ROBIN'S CAR - (MOVING) - NIGHT

In her rear view mirror, Robin watches Jerry and Elaine go into the airport.

EXT. ROAD NEAR AIRPORT - NIGHT

Robin's car drives through the airport business district, including the Ramada Inn. Just past the Ramada, her brake lights go on and she pulls over to the side of the road.

INT. RAMADA INN - FLIGHT DECK LOUNGE - NIGHT

Robin enters tentatively, wet from the rain. Jane is singing a song. Alex, at the bar, sees her. At first Jane doesn't see Robin, who takes a seat near the door.

ON JANE

singing the Kurt Weill ballad, "My Ship". Halfway through she notices Robin, but she continues singing, finishes the song. She makes her way to the back of the room.

ROBIN AND JANE

ROBIN

Hey.

JANE

Hi.

ROBIN

It's good to see you.

JANE

You too.

ROBIN

How's Anna?

JANE

She's got a big trial. She's okay. How was your mom? Holly told me.

ROBIN

I just dropped her off.

Two drinks arrive at the table, sent over by Alex. He nods to Robin. She nods back.

JANE

He feels bad.

ROBIN

I don't want to talk about that. I don't forgive you, but I don't want to talk about it.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JANE

I wouldn't forgive me, I
wouldn't. Fine.

(beat)

How are you feeling?

ROBIN

T-cells at 400.

JANE

You saw Susan? Good. How's
the ddI working?

ROBIN

Oh, you know. I go back on AZT
in September. I'm okay.

(beat)

I was so angry that night,
Jane--

JANE

Please don't say anything,
Robin.

ROBIN

It's just... I'm getting this
Dear John letter from the
world. Like, nice knowing you,
can I have my albums back? And
God is just a rumor, this great
rumor, but... It's so lonely.
Between me and everyone else
there's this space, and I'm on
one side, you know, and
everyone's on the other side,
and I'm screaming and they're
waving. And the one person I
think I'm holding is waving
too.

Jane reaches over, puts her hand on Robin's.

JANE

I am holding you.

ROBIN

There won't be any lies between
us, even for my own good?

JANE

No, ma'am. No lies.

An awkward moment, then Jane takes a chip, dips it in
salsa, drips some on her chin.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JANE

Then I got the job?

INT. ROBIN'S CAR - (MOVING) - NIGHT

Robin turns onto the street where she lives. Jane follows in Anna's car. But up ahead:

ROBIN'S POV - THE HOUSE

Three police cars, lights flashing, are parked in the driveway.

EXT. ROBIN'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Robin and Jane park their cars hurriedly, run up to the front yard. Abe and Holly come out of the house. Holly, in her Wal-Mart uniform, has plastic handcuffs on. Abe has his arm around her shoulder. There are other officers there, too.

ROBIN

Holly, what is it?

JANE

What the fuck is going on, Abe?

HOLLY

He's arresting me!

ROBIN

What for?

ABE

You know. Albuquerque.

JANE

(to Holly)

You told him --

ROBIN

(cutting her off)

What about Albuquerque? What happened in Albuquerque?

ABE

She told me and I take this name seriously. I cannot tell a lie.

JANE

That was Washington, asshole.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ABE

Whatever. I'm going to stand
by Holly one hundred percent,
but I'm sworn to uphold the
law. I wouldn't be much use to
her if I broke my oath, would
I?

HOLLY

It's what I deserve --

ROBIN

Don't say a word, not to him,
not to anyone! Promise me!
We'll get you a lawyer.

HOLLY

I'll miss you guys.

ABE

They'll treat her right, they
know she's my future wife.

OFFICER

Excuse me, ma'am.

They lead Holly to a police car. They all take off,
sirens blaring. The neighbors are staring. A beat.

JANE

Jesus.

ROBIN

I hope she keeps her mouth
shut.

HENRY (V.O.)

She wants to confess.

EXT. ALBUQUERQUE DOWNTOWN - NIGHT

A TITLE READS "ALBUQUERQUE, NEW MEXICO."

INT. "TEE PEE COFFEE SHOP" - NIGHT

HENRY MARTINEZ, Holly's public defender lawyer, is a
twenty-eight-year-old American Indian. He's sweating;
this isn't his usual case. He occupies a booth with
Jane, Robin, and Abe in this Albuquerque diner.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HENRY

She says she doesn't want to
bring her child into a world of
lies.

ABE

Don't you worry, Henry. She
promised me she's gonna keep
her mouth shut. As long as she
doesn't have to lie out loud,
that's our agreement.

JANE

Gee, you saved that day,
asshole.

ROBIN

Jane, come on.

JANE

We wouldn't be in this mess if
he hadn't ran to his boss like
a fuckputz brown-noser --

ABE

I took an oath --

JANE

We're in fucking Albuquerque
and Holly's going to trial
because you took an oath!

ROBIN

Come on, Janey, please.

(to Henry)

I don't know why we're not in
there with her as accessories
after the fact.

HENRY

There's no evidence you knew
anything about it; I mean,
about him dying from the blow.

JANE

So what have they got, assuming
Holly doesn't testify?

HENRY

Nothing, except for Abe's
hearsay testimony --

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ABE
It's the truth!

JANE
Shut up!

ABE
(being helpful)
And the Polaroid?

ROBIN
The Polaroid?
(to Henry)
The Polaroid?

ABE
I mentioned I'd seen a
snapshot...

HENRY
It's on the list of exhibits.
But I mean, come on. What the
hell can they do with that?

MATCH CUT TO:

THE POLAROID

now blown up to the size of a poster. Taken with Nick tied to the chair, it shows Holly smiling at the camera, licking his cheek, holding in her hand the strip of tape she stripped from his mouth. The poster's being held by the prosecutor MASARELLI -- smart, cocky, a real comer -- as he walks it past the jury box.

MASARELLI (O.S.)
Cruel? Inhuman? What words
would you use to describe the
woman who posed and took this
photograph?

We're in:

INT. ALBUQUERQUE COURTROOM - DAY

WE SEE the faces of the JURORS as they stare at the poster Masarelli shows them. They're a conservative bunch, all of them white, most of them over fifty. Half male, half female -- at least Henry's been that lucky. None of them seems friendly to Holly, who looks like the kind of friend they pray their granddaughters never make.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Holly, obvious, well-intentioned makeup covering her tattoos, sits at a table with Henry. Eager to pay her dues, she almost nods in agreement as she listens to Masarelli. Behind her, Robin and Jane, in dresses and heels.

MASARELLI

A photograph of a man who in a few short hours will be dead from wounds inflicted by the woman you see before you.

(pointing to Holly)

A man who mutely pleads with you to use this evidence of his humiliation and fashion it into a weapon that will bring her to justice.

JANE

(undertone to Robin)

Oh, please.

MASARELLI

For reasons best known to herself, Ms. Pulchik will not take the stand --

HENRY

(standing up)

Objection, Your Honor. The reasons are known to the court as well. It's a simple exercise of my client's fifth amendment rights --

JUDGE

Sustained.

MASARELLI

So, two people in this incident are mute: one, because the grave is always silent, and the second, because of her desire and right to avoid incriminating herself. But there were two others in that house that fateful day. And believe me, ladies and gentlemen, they will offer up their secrets...

JANE ON THE WITNESS STAND

Later. Jane's obviously been testifying for some time.

MASSARELLI

... we've heard your version today, and we also have it in your statements to the police. Not surprisingly, everything you've said tends to exonerates your friend.

JANE

- It's the truth.

MASSARELLI

And, perhaps not coincidentally, exonerates you.

JANE

There are no charges against me.

MASSARELLI

Yet.

JANE

(to Henry)

Is he allowed to threaten me?

JUDGE

Mr. Massarelli... please.

MASSARELLI

I apologize, Your Honor. Unintentional.

(referring to his notes)

There's something here I'm missing, though. Some context for your remarks.

(beat)

When did you first meet Holly Pulchik?

JANE

Two years ago. She was dating a musician friend of mine.

MASSARELLI

And you consider her a good friend today?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JANE

Yes.

MASSARELLI

What is the nature of your
friendship?

JANE

Excuse me?

MASSARELLI

Let me re-phrase the question.
How would you characterize your
"friendship"?

JANE

We're friends, that's all.
(to the Judge)
What's this "friendship" stuff?

MASSARELLI

Precisely what I want to find
out. Let me put this
delicately, to avoid offending
the court... Is there a
romantic character to this
"friendship"?

Henry jumps up.

HENRY

Objection. Irrelevant and
immaterial.

MASSARELLI

Goes to credibility, Your
Honor.

JUDGE

Sustained --

MASSARELLI

(interrupting)
May I approach, Your Honor?

Massarelli and Henry approach the bench.

MASSARELLI

It's my contention, Your Honor,
that the witness is in love
with the defendant --

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HENRY

For God's sake, there's no evidence to suggest --

MASSARELLI

I have spoken to friends of Ms. DeLuca's in Los Angeles --

HENRY

And even if there is, how does that --

MASSARELLI

It's obvious, Your Honor, that it prejudices the witness's testimony.

JUDGE

Agreed. Overruled. You may proceed, Mr. Massarelli.

Henry, annoyed, returns to his seat.

MASSARELLI

To repeat, "Ms." DeLuca, is there a romantic character to your friendship with the defendant?

JANE

No.

MASSARELLI

But you are, however, one of these gay women we read about. Or do you prefer "lesbians?"

JANE

Do I prefer them to you?

MASSARELLI

Are you gay?

JANE

Holly's not gay, okay, it's nothing to do with her --

MASSARELLI

Your Honor --

JUDGE

Please answer the question.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MASSARELLI

Are you gay?

Jane looks at Holly, her eyes saying she's sorry this might screw things up. Finally:

JANE

Yes. You probably hear that from women all the time. This is one time it's the truth.

Massarelli doesn't seem to know he's been insulted. A woman in the jury box smiles. But Henry's looking at the other eleven jurors who aren't...

INT. ALBUQUERQUE MOTEL - ROBIN'S ROOM - NIGHT

Robin comes in, looking exhausted. She sits on the bed, lies back on it, still in her coat. Jane comes out of the bathroom in a robe, carrying a bottle of conditioner, her hair wrapped in a towel.

JANE

How is she?

ROBIN

Scared shitless. I think even Honest Abe's sorry he squealed.

Jane pours a puddle of conditioner in her hand, massages it through her hair.

JANE

I didn't do her any favors.

ROBIN

Henry says he'll just pretend you didn't testify. I'm supposed to make up for it.
(re the hair)
Let me do that.

Robin begins massaging conditioner through Jane's hair. Jane sits patiently, holding a wide-toothed comb. They're seated in front of the mirror.

JANE

(pointing to the nightstand)
Susan called.

Robin takes a little beat, looks at the message, then goes back to Jane's hair.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JANE

Why do you need more tests?

ROBIN

It's routine.

She gestures for the comb and starts tenderly working it through Jane's hair.

JANE

T-cells?

ROBIN

Two-eighty. Not terrible.

JANE

You've been on AZT for eighteen months.

ROBIN

They say two years. Sometimes longer. I'm not dying.

JANE

I'm just asking.

A beat as Robin continues combing.

ROBIN

Do you think I'm not going to make it?

Jane looks at Robin in the mirror.

JANE

Do I look worried?

(she holds up her hand
to show it's steady)

See? Who's worried?

Robin nods and keeps combing. Jane keeps up a soft patter of small gossip.

JANE

Anna called to wish us luck.

ROBIN

That's nice.

JANE

And Alex... oh, they're giving me a cut of the bar when I get back, can you believe that?...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

And Robin combs and Jane talks...

EXT. ALBUQUERQUE COURTHOUSE - DAY

INT. ALBUQUERQUE COURTROOM - DAY

Robin is on the stand; Henry is packing back and forth, questioning her.

HENRY

And who exactly struck the blow that killed Nick Hopper?

ROBIN

I don't know. I don't know what he died of.

HENRY

Exactly. Thank you for making that point. Let me re-phrase that. Did you witness a blow to Nick Hopper?

ROBIN

Yes. Holly hit him in self-defense. A single blow, just to slow him down.

HENRY

And did it stop him?

ROBIN

Kind of. I wanted to call the police but that made him really mad. So Holly decided to leave him. We taped him to that chair to keep him out of the way.

HENRY

You left him helpless in that chair?

ROBIN

No, sir. We left water there, and some food -- that's in the police report, I think -- and the phone.

HENRY

And did you leave Mr. Hopper believing he was going to die?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ROBIN

No, sir. He was alive and well. It wouldn't have taken him long to get out of that chair. I don't think it did take him long, did it? That's what the police say, anyway.

MASSARELLI

(wearily standing)

Your Honor, may we let the police testify for themselves?

JUDGE

Please confine yourself to what you yourself saw, heard or know.

ROBIN

I'm sorry, Your Honor.
(to Massarelli)
Sorry.

HENRY

And what was your plan?
Exactly when were you going to contact Mr. Hopper again?

ROBIN

Holly didn't want to see him again, so we didn't call or anything. It was over. So you can imagine when the police arrived at our house and told us...

HENRY

And that was the first time you knew that Mr. Hopper had died that day?

ROBIN

(not quite answering)

We were shocked.

HENRY

Thank you, Ms. Nickerson.

Now Massarelli approaches the witness stand.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MASSARELLI

Let me get this straight, Ms. Nickerson. You expect us to believe that the defendant, pregnant with this man's child, would leave him and never look back?

ROBIN

It was over. He beat her and abused her -- I saw how he treated her.

MASSARELLI

But not to call him? Not to give him her address so he could forward mail? And practical reasons aside...

(to the jury)

Say she did strike a blow in self-defense -- let's just assume -- and she decides to let him stew in his juices awhile. But a couple hours, a few days later, she realizes, hey, he's my little baby's daddy. And you know, he wasn't so bad. Maybe he had a temper. All she knows is, she needs him. They're a family.

ROBIN

That's not a family --

MASSARELLI

What's going to prevent that woman from calling? And when she calls, finding out he's dead. And then hiding from the police, knowing she killed him, knowing she's guilty of murder?

ROBIN

It was over with him. I know you think a girl like her, the most important thing in her life is her man. But she didn't need him. She had us.

(turning to the jury)

I don't know what it is, but there's something that goes on between women.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ROBIN (CONT'D)

You guys know that because it's the same for you. I'm not saying one sex is better than the other. I'm just saying like speaks to like. Love or whatever doesn't always keep, so you find out what does. If you're lucky.

MASSARELLI

Thank you for that illuminating view of the war between the sexes. Are you a lesbian too, Ms. Nickerson?

ROBIN

No, sir.

(directly at him)

But at times I understand the inclination.

MASSARELLI

Suppose there is this bond between women, suppose men are disposable --

ROBIN

-- I didn't say that --

MASSARELLI

-- if that's the case, why should we believe you?

Wouldn't you say anything to keep your sister, your...

(proud of this pun)

..."bosom buddy", so to speak, out of jail?

ROBIN

I'm under oath. I wouldn't perjure myself.

MASSARELLI

I'm glad I don't have to remind you of that. And for the record, you never knew, until the police told you, that this man was dead of his wounds?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ROBIN
(trying not to perjure
herself)
If I'm lying, may I be struck
down with some terrible
disease.

MASSARELLI
A simple yes or no will do, Ms.
Nickerson. Did you know this
man was dead?

ROBIN
(finally)
No, I did not. Neither did
Holly. I swear to God, that's
the truth.

INT. ALBUQUERQUE COURTHOUSE - CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

A small room with glass windows for lawyer-client
conferences. Holly, Robin, and Jane are here waiting
for Henry, who bursts in with Abe.

HENRY
Okay, got an offer.
Involuntary manslaughter with
extenuating circumstances.

ABE
One to two years, parole after
six months.

HENRY
I got you minimum security in
Ohio, two hours from home.
Good medical care.

HOLLY
I'd hate to have my baby in
jail.

ROBIN
What are the chances for an
acquittal?

HENRY
He's dead as a result of her
actions. Juries want to make
someone pay for that. I know
three, maybe four jurors who
are against us, just by looking
at them.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HENRY (CONT'D)

She didn't testify in her own defense. And I don't know how much good you did her.

HOLLY

But my baby will have a mother who's a convicted felon. I don't know. What do you think?

JANE

I think it's better than --

HOLLY

I mean Abe. What do you think, babe?

ABE

Take it. I'll keep the baby till you get out.

ROBIN

Yeah, but --

HOLLY

That's what I'll do, then.

HENRY

(on his way out)

Fine. I'll tell them we take it.

JANE

Hey, that's great, Holly, really.

HOLLY

Thanks. Could we be alone for a minute?

EXT. ALBUQUERQUE COURTHOUSE - HALLWAY - DAY

Robin and Jane look into the interview room as Holly and Abe kiss passionately. The blinds aren't fully closed.

JANE

So much for the bonds between women.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ROBIN
(watching them as if
she's remembering)
You can't fight that.

JANE
Anyway, you were good up there.
Whatever happened to the
honesty is the best policy?

ROBIN
- You don't want to go overboard.

She sits down. Jane is still excited about the outcome.

JANE
Anna's gonna die, she was
predicting eight-to-ten easy.
She thought we were gonna end
up there too as conspirators or
whatever...

Something is happening inside Robin. She sits quietly,
not panicking, trying to figure out what's going on.

ROBIN
Jane...

JANE
Listen, I'll find Henry, see
how long we have to hang
around. Coke, Sprite, what do
you want? Robin?
(suddenly alarmed, she
bends down)
What is it?

ROBIN
I think you better take me
home.

MONTAGE:

The SOUND OF JANE SINGING over the following:

INT. ALBUQUERQUE COURTROOM - DAY (MOS)

The Judge sentences Holly. Abe stands behind her.
Henry seems satisfied.

INT. OHIO MINIMUM SECURITY FACILITY - DAY (MOS)

Holly shares a room with her roommate. Snapshots of Robin, Jane, and Abe cover the wall behind her. She sits on the bunk doing her toenails, her prison shift tight against her belly.

EXT. PITTSBURGH - NIGHT

The skyline at night. We're back.

INT. DR. NEWBAUER'S OFFICE - DAY (MOS)

Susan looks grave as she goes over some test results. Robin listens, smiles. She joins Jane outside. Robin gives her a thumbs-up; Jane is relieved, even though she doesn't quite believe it.

INT. OHIO PRISON - NIGHT (MOS)

A tough-looking FEMALE GUARD stares at Robin's photo on the wall. Holly says something discouraging, hands her Jane's photo instead. Then Holly bends forward, cramping, going into labor...

INT. OHIO HOSPITAL - RECOVERY ROOM - NIGHT

Holly is drowsing peacefully. Abe kisses her, leaves her a stuffed animal. Jane smiles. They tiptoe out of the room together into:

INT. OHIO HOSPITAL - HALL OUTSIDE RECOVERY ROOM - NIGHT

As they leave the room:

ABE

I wanted to be here for it.
Help her with her breathing.

JANE

Next time. Now don't get too
excited, newborns can look
pretty ugly.

The tough-looking Female Guard stationed outside the room is staring at Jane.

JANE

What? What is it?

FEMALE GUARD

Nothing.

They go down the hallway, Abe chattering while Jane, bugged, keeps looking over her shoulder...

INT. OHIO HOSPITAL - NURSERY - NIGHT

Jane and Abe go to look at the babies in the nursery. All white babies -- except the one under the sign, "Pulchik". It's black. Jane and Abe see the baby. Abe turns to Jane.

JANE

Don't look at me.

EXT. PITTSBURGH AIRPORT RAMADA INN - NIGHT

Jane has better billing now.

INT. LOUNGE - NIGHT

Alex listens as JANE SINGS. She now has a sax player again, a long-haired guy named KEVIN, as good as she is.

INT. ROBIN'S HOUSE - ROBIN'S ROOM - DAY

Jane is dressed for work. She has a thermometer in Robin's mouth. She's on the phone. Jane looks at the thermometer, shows it to Robin. Robin closes her eyes, gets out of bed, pulls an overnight case from under the bed, opens it. It's already packed.

JANE

(into phone, re the
thermometer)

Yeah, but just over. Okay.

Jane looks at Robin, makes a face, nods. Robin waves her hand: why not?

JANE

(back into phone)

Okay. An hour. See you there.

Robin's hand is shaking as she checks her suitcase.

JANE

Honey, it's just the lung stuff. They'll put you the IV antibiotic and you'll be out of there.

ROBIN

Yeah. I'm supposed to call Holly today. That's such a hassle to set up.

JANE

Call from the hospital.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JANE (CONT'D)
(off Robin's face)
Hey, come on. Do I look
worried?

ROBIN
A little. Hold up your hand.

JANE
(flips her the bird)
Come on, is this ready?

Robin sits down on the bed, winded but in better
spirits.

ROBIN
You finish.

Jane pulls out a nightgown. It's cotton, floral, Laura
Ashley.

JANE
I hate you in this. It's
staying --

ROBIN
It's warm --

JANE
Here's another, Jesus, where do
you buy this stuff? It's like
Klan sleepwear.

INT. MERCY HOSPITAL - ROBIN'S ROOM - NIGHT

Just after sunset. Robin is in bed, breathing oxygen.
The TV is ON, MUTED. Robin is watching Jane, who is
sleeping in a chair. Jane comes to, sees Robin watching
her. When Robin talks, we can tell her lungs are
congested.

ROBIN
It's okay. You've got an hour.

JANE
Wow, I was really out of it.
How are you feeling?

ROBIN
(pulling the nasal tube
from her)
Fever's up a little.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JANE
Always is in the afternoon.

ROBIN
I'm a lot of work, aren't I?

JANE
Yeah, when I think I could be
bowling --

ROBIN
No, you've taken everything on
for me. It scares me.

JANE
That makes one of us.

ROBIN
I loved Tommy. But it was so
weird, the year he was sick.
Nobody was home, I ate cereal
every night, and every weekend
I had to go to the hospital and
sit with him and watch TV. And
Mom was so angry all the time,
and Tommy was so scared. And I
was waiting for him to die so I
could get back to normal, get
on with my life.

JANE
This is my life. Don't hurry.
I can do this a long time.

A moment. Jane is touching Robin's hand.

ROBIN
Tell me the truth. Am I dying?
Is that what you think?

Jane's eyes flicker away, rest on the clock.

ANNA

AT THE AIRPORT stands with a sign: ELAINE & JERRY.

BACK TO SCENE

ROBIN
Remember, you don't lie to me,
even for my own good. You
promised.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JANE

(a beat)

I believe in this rumor you're
getting well.

Robin knows what she is saying. She lays her head back
against the pillows, closes her eyes.

ROBIN

(unaccusingly,
grateful)

You make it hard to die.

INT. MERCY HOSPITAL - NIGHT

Elaine and Jerry come into Robin's room. Robin's
asleep. Elaine sits down. After a moment, she gets up,
gets some hand cream, pulls the sheets from Robin's
feet, begins rubbing them.

INT. MERCY HOSPITAL - NIGHT

A lonely chair outside Robin's room. Jane is walking up
and down the corridor, playing with an unlit cigarette.
A nurse comes by, frowning, and Jane touches the end of
the cigarette to her cheek to show it's not lit.

Anna arrives at the end of the hallway with a bag of
McDonald's. She comes up to Jane, hugs her, bouncing
the bag of McDonald's against her back. Jane says
something in Anna's ear. Anna looks surprised.

EXT. LOUISE'S ROW HOUSE - PITTSBURGH - NIGHT

Anna sits in the car, a rosary in her hand, praying.

INT. LOUISE'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Louise and Jane.

LOUISE

What curse, honey? Who?

JANE

My friend. My friend Robin.
You said I had a friend with a
dark cloud hanging over her,
and you were right, you were
right at the time, and you said
you could take it off her. I
don't believe in this shit, I
gotta tell you, I mean, look at
you, you're a woman with
Cheetos, what can you do?

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JANE (CONT'D)

But hey, what the fuck, what do I know?

LOUISE

Robin -- that's the girl with AIDS, Anna's friend?

JANE

My friend. And Anna's not supposed to be running around talking about it.

LOUISE

Oh, and Holly -- I hear the baby's colored. I'm very sympathetic.

JANE

Look, can you do it?

LOUISE

Do what?

JANE

Take the curse off. You said you could do that.

Louise pauses.

LOUISE

It's AIDS, honey.

JANE

It's a lung infection right now. You can leave the fucking AIDS, just get the lungs clear. I don't want a miracle. I want the tide to turn, that's all. I want 51-49 in her favor, can't you do that much? I've got money. I'll pay you.

She slides a roll of bills over to Louise. Louise puts her hand over hers.

LOUISE

Pay when it works. I can't promise anything.

JANE

So you'll take a shot.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Louise nods, begins lighting candles. Jane stares at them, fighting back panic...

INT. MERCY HOSPITAL - ROBIN'S ROOM - NIGHT

Elaine is there, watching. Jane is back. An officious NURSE comes in. She wakes up Robin.

JANE

Don't wake her.

NURSE

Sorry.

Elaine blows her nose.

NURSE

Is that a cold? Because she can't afford an infection. I'll have to mask you.

JANE

She's crying, do you mind? She's her mother.

NURSE

People think they're being nice but they come visiting with colds --

JANE

It's not a fucking cold! Jesus. You are one major hoo-hoo, you know that?

At that, Elaine smiles.

NURSE

And what's a hoo-hoo?

ELAINE

It's a cunt, dear. Now leave us alone.

The Nurse, deeply offended, goes. Elaine leans back, closes her eyes again, pats Jane's hand.

INT. MERCY HOSPITAL - ROBIN'S ROOM - DAY

Later. Just Jane there, sleeping.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ROBIN (O.S.)

Tommy?

Jane looks up, SEES ROBIN looking past her.

JANE

Robin? It's Jane.

ROBIN

(coming to)

I know. Where's Mom?

JANE

Jerry took her to the house.
How do you feel?

ROBIN

Will you call her?

Jane is suddenly very nervous.

JANE

Why? Okay, yeah, sure.

(she picks up the
phone, dials)

Hello? Jane... Yeah, she's
asking for you. I don't know.

(she hangs up)

Do you want a doctor?

Robin talks with difficulty, breathing hard.

ROBIN

(whispery)

No.

Jane comes closer.

JANE

Okay. Just be comfortable.
You don't have to talk.

ROBIN

I had a crush on a woman once.
I was ten.

JANE

That's when I had crushes on
guys.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ROBIN

She was a strawberry blonde.
That's what my mom called her.
She was the babysitter at a
hotel we stayed at right before
my Dad went to Vietnam. She
was beautiful. Strawberry
blonde.

JANE

So I'll dye my hair. This
could work.

ROBIN

I wanted to see Holly's baby.

JANE

You will. And Holly'll be out
in five months.

ROBIN

It was me you loved, wasn't it?

JANE

(after a struggle to
speak)

Kind of. Still do.

ROBIN

Well, I loved you too. I don't
want a funeral, but Mom will.
It's got to be here. Don't let
her take me back to
Connecticut.

JANE

Okay.

ROBIN

But afterwards, you have a
party at the house. Okay? A
big party.

JANE

Sure.

Robin closes her eyes. Jane's eyes fill with tears.

ROBIN

Don't let go of my hand.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JANE

I'm here, honey.
(suddenly panicking)
I want to go with you!
(getting control)
Sorry, sweetie. I'm here. I'm
holding you.

Robin's breathing gets slower, deeper. With her free hand, Jane brushes Robin's damp hair from her face...

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. ROBIN'S HOUSE - FRONT - DAY

Pink and white balloons fly from the mailbox. There's a wooden ladder on the front porch.

EXT. ROBIN'S HOUSE - BACKYARD - DAY

Signs of a party here. Rented tables on the lawn, and more balloons, and Jane emptying bags of ice into a cooler. She's wearing a blouse of Robin's.

INT. ROBIN'S HOUSE - DAY

KITCHEN. Quiet. It's late afternoon, but it's a quiet, almost noiseless day. Bowls of food. On the refrigerator, pictures of Robin and Jane and Holly, some taken from their cross-country trip of the year before. There's also a picture of Holly in her prison outfit, holding her infant girl...

LIVING ROOM. The piano is here, its cover closed. Someone brushes by the CAMERA and opens the front door. WE FOLLOW THAT SOMEONE out onto:

EXT. ROBIN'S HOUSE - FRONT PORCH - DAY

CLOSE ON A COMPUTER-PRINTED SIGN that is being unfolded between the two pillars of the front porch. As we read it -- "WELCOME HOME HOLLY, ABE, AND MARY TODD" -- WE SEE that Robin is unrolling it. Thinner, paler, sweating with the effort, but definitely alive and fairly well. It's four months since we saw her in the hospital.

JANE (O.S.)

What the hell are you doing up there?

WE SEE Jane standing below.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ROBIN

Oh, shut up, I'm fine. What do you think?

JANE

The courts are too lenient, that's what I think.

EXT. ROBIN'S HOUSE - SIDE YARD - DAY (MOS)

Later. Mr. Vogel, Robin's landlord, stares, drink in hand, at the siding of the house where Robin has preserved the heart and initials he painted forty years ago.

INT. ROBIN'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY (MOS)

Jerry watches Anna prepare the salad -- especially her quick, determined chopping of a cucumber.

EXT. ROBIN'S HOUSE - BACKYARD - DAY (MOS)

Elaine and Alex drink, watching the partyers. Elaine indicates a woman, Alex nods: she's gay. Surprised, Elaine indicates another woman; again Alex nods his head.

EXT. ROBIN'S HOUSE - DRIVEWAY - DAY (MOS)

Henry, the Indian attorney from Albuquerque, listens politely and looks at a dent in the side of a car while one of the partyers explains, talking with his hands, how it got there.

EXT. ROBIN'S HOUSE - FRONT PORCH - DAY (MOS)

Sunset. Robin sits on a chair on the front porch, talking with Jane. Suddenly she stands up, excited. She's seen Abe's car. She rushes down to the street, Jane following. The car pulls up. Abe's driving; Holly's in the front seat; the baby, MARY TODD, is in a car seat in the back.

Jane and Robin open the doors; Henry joins them. Holly gets out, hugs Jane. Robin's opening the back door and pulling little Mary Todd from her car-seat.

We see Jane watching Robin cradle Mary Todd.

INT. ROBIN'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Most of the party has moved inside. We catch moments of conversation:

KITCHEN - ROBIN AND HOLLY

ROBIN

That was close, all right, but
I got through and the next day
the Pentamidine started
working.

HOLLY

What are your T-cells now?

ROBIN

Seventy-five. I was under
twenty.

HOLLY

You ever find the guy who gave
it to you?

ROBIN

I heard from his parents. My
old address was in his book.

HOLLY

His parents?

ROBIN

You know. "Survived by"...

HOLLY

Oh. Well, you look real good.

ROBIN

I feel good.

They stand together companionably.

HOLLY

Nice party. I'm gonna find
Abe.

UPSTAIRS - HOLLY'S ROOM

Holly brings Abe to climax. He collapses on top of her,
spent and surprised.

ABE

Jesus, where'd you learn that?

On Holly, smiling...

DINING ROOM - JERRY AND ANNA

They sip, watching Jane.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JERRY

We saw her sing last night. It was a nice club. Better than the airport.

ANNA

(not entirely pleased)

Hour for hour, she made more than I did last month. But of course my benefits are better. We're very happy.

JERRY

But she still lives here. I mean, not with you.

Just then Jane bustles by, kissing Anna lightly on the cheek as she passes.

JANE

(whispering)

I'm gonna get her to sing.

(to Jerry)

Hey, you play for awhile. I get paid for this.

Jane goes on by. Anna smiles, catches Jerry looking at her.

ANNA

I'll live.

LIVING ROOM - ELAINE AND ABE

Elaine and Abe watch Jerry play the piano.

ELAINE

Will they re-instate you?

ABE

They will. I mean, we have to sue, but they will.

ELAINE

Meantime...

ABE

There's room here. And these gals... they could use a man around the house. You know.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ELAINE
What was his name again?

ABE
Who?

ELAINE
The dead guy.

ABE
Nick.

ELAINE
I don't know why I thought of
him.

Abe's smile fades a little...

INT. ROBIN'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Later. Jane is making a speech. Jerry has left the piano bench to her.

JANE
... so glad to have Holly back,
and her new baby, and her new
husband Abe --

Holly smiles, holds up her ring. Robin is holding Mary Todd. She holds her up to the crowd.

JANE
... and we're all happy to be
back here with our friends, in
good health. And now, by
popular request, we have 1977's
fourth-runner-up of the Miss
Connecticut pageant --

ROBIN
No way.

JANE
Come on. Everyone has to do a
party piece.

ROBIN
You're the singer, not me.

But the rest of the party encourage her to do it.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ELAINE

And it was third runner-up.

JANE

Come on, you're with friends
here.

(to Jerry, to provoke
Robin)

I've heard her in the shower,
it's nice white-girl singing.

ROBIN

Fine, one song. And then you
leave me alone.

JANE

All right! What's it gonna be?
"Close to You"?

(some GROANS from the
audience as Jane
tinkles out the first
bars)

Hey, don't shoot the piano
player.

ROBIN

Let's do the other one.

(she leans over to
Kevin, the sax player)

You come in and help me out,
right?

Jane plays a chord or two.

JANE

Okay. This is it. This is
what catapulted our little girl
to third place.

ROBIN

Actually fourth, there's the
winner, and the first runner
up, etc. So if you're the
third runner up, you're really
fourth.

JANE

Is this more than we need to
know?

ROBIN

Shut up and play. Go on.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Jane plays the intro chord to Carole King's "Way Over Yonder", but Robin can't join it.

ROBIN

Just do it again.

So Jane goes through the first stanza with Kevin on sax. Then Robin begins, in a thin, sweet voice, holding the baby as she does.

ROBIN

"Way over yonder/ Is a place
that I know/ Where I can find
shelter/ From hunger and cold."

Robin stops suddenly, unable to continue. Jane pulls her down on the bench and helps her out by singing the next verse. It's the song about the hereafter, a white girl's spiritual, and Robin's voice, thin and thready but very moving, blends with Jane's earthier sound. The room is very quiet and everyone we know -- Elaine, Jerry, Holly, Abe, Henry, Susan -- watches intently, and those in couples among the crowd reach for their partners' hands. The listeners believe Robin's singing about where she's going; but the singers know it's about where she is now.

ROBIN & JANE

(finishing)

Maybe tomorrow/ I'll find my
way/ To the land where the
honey runs/ In rivers each day.
And the sweet-tasting good
life/ Is so easily found
Way over yonder/ That's where
I'm bound."

A moment between Jane and Robin, then APPLAUSE. Robin stands, bows. Jane takes the baby. Jerry slides onto the bench, begins playing dance music. Kevin picks it up.

ROBIN

Thank you, thank you. Next
time we're going to re-create
my poise, thinking-on-the-spot
portion, wherein I explain how
I'm in favor of world peace and
courtesy.

Jerry takes Elaine onto the floor. Other couples start.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ROBIN

How'd I do?

JANE

You dance better than you sing?

ROBIN

I'd almost have to.

JANE

Well, if we wait for these guys to
- ask us...

Alex smiles at Robin, indicates he'd like to dance. Robin holds up her hand to indicate, "Wait a minute".

ROBIN

Boys. Get used to it, Mary Todd.

The two women and the baby start dancing slowly, casually to the music. It's a soft, safe night, and the faces of their friends as they watch catch the light and then the shadow of the women as they dance past, until we...

FADE OUT:

THE END

